

**THE SENSE OF BELONGING AND THE
MIGRATION TRAJECTORIES OF THE MEMBERS OF
THE LATIN AMERICAN COMMUNITY IN EDINBURGH**

Marta Sokół-Klepacka

**A Thesis Submitted for the Degree of PhD
at the
University of St Andrews**



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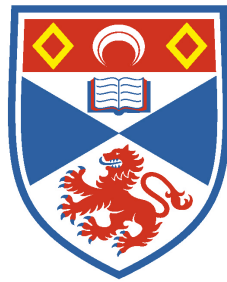
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The Sense Of Belonging And The Migration Trajectories
Of The Members Of The Latin American Community In
Edinburgh

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University of
St Andrews

This thesis is submitted in partial fulfilment for the degree of PhD
at the
University of St Andrews

Date of Submission

16.11.2016

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Thank you for submitting your ethical application which was considered at the Social Anthropology Ethics Committee meeting on 28 September 2015 when the following documents were reviewed:

1. Ethical Application Form

The Social Anthropology Ethics Committee has been delegated to act on behalf of the University Teaching and Research Ethics Committee (UTREC) and has granted this application ethical approval. The particulars relating to the approved project are as follows -

Approval Code:	SA11768	Approved on:	28/9/2015	Approval Expiry:	27/9/2018
Project Title:	The sense of belonging and the migration trajectories of the members of the Latin American community in Edinburgh				
Researcher(s):	Marta Sokol-Klepcka				
Supervisor(s):	Dr Stan Frankland				

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Yours sincerely

Convener of the School Ethics Committee
cc Supervisor

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To Anthony and Elizabeth

Abstract

This thesis is the outcome of my twelve-month ethnographic fieldwork among Latin Americans in Edinburgh. Using life story interviews, participant observation and online communication technologies, the research aims to explore the senses of belonging that different Latin Americans in Edinburgh have claimed at different moments of their lives and the dynamics of concurrent identities – the maintenance and reconstruction of national identity as well as the emergence of Latin American identity. It also addresses the multiplicity of reasons why various individuals have chosen to belong to the Latin American 'community' in Edinburgh and scrutinises their manifold home-making processes. Moreover, this thesis hopes to contribute to the studies on Latin Americans and to a debate regarding whether members of communities should be treated as individuals or as collective actors.

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Table of Contents

Abstract	vi
Acknowledgements	vii
List of Figures	xii
Introduction	1
The Journey to the project	1
Research Overview	2
What is ‘community’?	6
Structure of fieldwork and methodology	8
Chapter Outline	15
What about migration?	16
Chapter 1 - The context	19
The historical context	19
<i>European migration to Latin America</i>	19
<i>Latin American emigration to Europe</i>	21
The Geo-political context	24
Latin American Migration To UK- Settings	27
<i>Latin Americans in Edinburgh</i>	29
<i>Migration within the UK to Edinburgh</i>	35
<i>Latin American migrants’ ‘legal grounds for entry’ to the UK</i>	36
<i>Reasons for Latin American migration to Edinburgh</i>	39
Chapter 2 - The “Idea Of Latin” America	50
‘Latino’	54
(In)Visibility Of The Latin Americans In The UK- Political And Sensorial Identity	60
What One Is Not	62
‘None[t]here-ness’ As An Identity	66
Chapter 3 – Latin American Identity	68
Marisol – Identity as a personal journey	70

Collective system of representation; Manuel's personal boundaries	78
---	----

Chapter 4 – Latin American Dynamics **94**

Non-verbal communication	97
Consociation	101
Bromas and chistes	104
Internet	106
Negative 'Latin American dynamics'	108
Latin American stereotypes in the USA and in the UK	111
<i>Latin American stereotypes among Latin Americans themselves</i>	116

Chapter 5 - The Latin American Community **123**

The Meaning Of The <i>Día De Los Muertos</i> ['Day Of The Dead']	125
<i>Day of Dead as a celebration of national identity</i>	133
<i>Death in Mexico and in Britain</i>	137
<i>The news of death</i>	139
<i>Sliding scale of migration location</i>	142

Chapter 6- How People Stay In Touch? **148**

Social capital	152
Technological communication	156
Emotions and family	163

Chapter 7- 'Home' And Home-Making Practices **169**

The Imaginary Home	178
Sensory Home-Making - Smell, Touch, Sight And Taste Through Food And Material Objects	182
Haran's 'home'	192
Shall we dance more?- close and away from 'home'	196
The rhythm of music	197
Music and 'home'	199
Associations with music and dance	202
<i>La tierra la tira mucho a uno</i>	204

Conclusion	208
-------------------	------------

References	215
-------------------	------------

List of Figures

i	Map of Latin America	1
ii	Photograph of the barbeque during the Meadows Festival	13
1.1	Carlos' symbolical vote against Pinochet staying as a president	22
1.2	Photograph of a newspaper article of Carlos' life story- the founder of the 'Latin America sings in Edinburgh' group and the Chilean exile.	43
1.3	Venezuelan Committee in Scotland' poster	47
2.1	'AMERICA is a whole continent, not a country'	50
2.2	'Waldseemüller's 'the New World' map	52
3.1	The author and her friend at the Venezuelan food stand in Grassmarket. <i>Arepas and tamales</i>	70
3.2	Myri's objects brought with her from Mexico - a doll in a folkloric Mexican dress, a fleece cat, Mezcal, Reposado and Tequila	83
3.3	Brazilian <i>Tupiniquim</i> food stand on Meadow Walk. Juice Bike, <i>feijoada</i> and <i>crepes</i>	90
4.1	The <i>Fiestas Patrias Peruanas</i> - celebrations of Peru's independence	99
5.1	Mercedes' altar for the <i>El Día de Los Muertos</i> ['The Day of the Dead']	128
6.1	Screenshot of some of the events I attended and was invited to them through Facebook	151
6.2	Screenshot of some of the events I attended and was invited to them through Facebook	151
6.3	Screenshot of some of the events I attended and was invited to them through Facebook	152
6.4	Screenshot from a Facebook conversation on a Facebook wall of a group 'Chilenos en Edimburgo'	154
6.5	Screenshot from the author's Facebook friend wall of his news feed	155
6.6	Screenshot from the author's Facebook friend wall of his news feed	156
6.7	Screenshot from Facebook of the information from the admin of the group 'Mexicanos en Edimburgo'	167

6.8	Screenshot of a Facebook post from Gilberto, the admin of the group ‘Venezolanos en Escocia-Venezuelans in Scotland’	168
6.9	Screenshot of the responses to Gilberto’s post.	168
7.1	<i>Rocotos</i> grown at Mercedes’ flat.	183
7.2	<i>Rocotos</i> and <i>huacatay</i> grown at Mercedes’ flat.	184
7.3	Pablo’s objects brought with him from Peru- <i>charrango</i> , <i>Sol del Cusco</i> , <i>boldo tea</i> , <i>Medisana Emoliente classic tea</i> and <i>mazamorra morada</i>	186
7.4	Carlos and his wife’s objects brought with them from Peru- <i>el ekeko</i> , Peruvian cushions, a photograph of Machu Picchu	188
7.5	Patricia’s objects brought with her from Ecuador – Ecuadorian flag, some spices, a bag of <i>achiote</i> and some artisan products	190

Introduction



Figure i Map of Latin America (<http://rinternacionales.cenlat.org>)

The Journey to the project

It was October 2012 and Mercedes, a friend of mine – originally from Peru – visited us at our home to meet the newest member of our family, Anthony, who was born at the end of September 2012. I had just begun my MRes in Social Anthropology. Mercedes asked me about my plans for PhD research. I told her that, after travelling with my

husband-to-be between December 2008 – March 2009 through Central America, from Panama through Costa Rica, Nicaragua, Honduras, Guatemala and Belize to Mexico, I had become interested in the topic and considered carrying out my research in Chiapas in Mexico, among the Tzotzil people near a beautiful town called San Cristobal de las Casas. I wanted to explore the Tzotzil of San Juan Chamula's unique identity and syncretised beliefs, along with the political and historical contexts of the local community. I remember then how she looked at me with surprise and said: 'Why don't you do a project about us? There are indeed Latin Americans in Edinburgh'. Mercedes made me reconsider and rethink my research. From that moment I started to consider doing research in the place where I live. I happened to meet more and more people from Latin America and got interested in carrying out fieldwork in an urban setting in Europe. I realised at that point that I would like to centre my thesis in Edinburgh and devote it to an 'invisible' Latin American 'community' in the city. I met again with Mercedes before writing my research proposal and asked whether she thought that the members of the Latin American 'community' would be willing to speak with me. She did not doubt it and offered me help: "You will come to one of our events that I organise and introduce yourself and the project. We will arrange a tent. We will have tea and coffee and those who want to will come to you and speak with you". Mercedes offered to help me. She is incredible and so helpful. That made me want even more to go ahead with a project based on the Latin American 'community' in Edinburgh, and subsequently begin meeting more of its members.

Research Overview

So far, most of the research work on Latin American migrants in Europe has focused mainly on migration to one place. Most Latin Americans migrated to Spain, Italy and Portugal due to the post-colonial bonds, and because they speak the same languages – Spanish and Portuguese – that are spoken in these countries (Lafleur 2011). However, other European countries, such as the UK, have observed increases in Latin American migration too. The largest Latin American 'communities' are to be found in Spain, Italy, Portugal, the United Kingdom, Switzerland and Sweden (Pellegrino 2004: 7).

Migrants very often cross more than one border and change destinations. Many Latin Americans have started migrating to a second destination for various reasons (McIlwaine et al. 2011).

Most works on Latin Americans in the UK concentrate on one nationality group alone, and were carried out by researchers from Departments of Geography, Media and Cultural Studies, Development Studies, and Law and Social Sciences. For example, McIlwaine (2005) focused on transnational ‘Coping practices among Colombian migrants in London’, so did Guarnizo (2008) and Cock (2009, 2011). James (2005) looked at *Ecuadorian identity, community and multi-cultural integration* of Ecuadorians in London. Sveinsson (2007) focused on Bolivians in London and the ‘challenges and achievements of a London community’. Wright (2010) focused on ‘well-being among Peruvian migrants in London and Madrid’. Evans et al. (2011) looked at Brazilian diaspora in the UK. Studies on more specific issues were conducted by other scholars, such as Bermudez Torres (2008), who looked at *Political transnationalism and peace-building among Colombian migrants in the UK and Spain*. McIlwaine and Bermudez (2015) explored issues of *Ambivalent citizenship and extra-territorial voting among Colombians in London and Madrid*. Román-Velázquez (1999) scrutinised *The Making of Latin London: Salsa Music, Place and Identity*. Sheringham (2011) analysed the transnational religious practices among Brazilian migrants in London, and das Graças Brightwell (2012) looked at Brazilian ‘diasporic’ culinary cultures in London. Serpente (2013) looked at the Chilean and Argentinian diaspora and the narratives of the second generation. Ramírez (2014) explored *The Chilean Diaspora of London: Diasporic Social Scenes and the Spatial Politics of Home*.

This thesis looks at Latin Americans as one whole group, as still not much work has been carried out from such a perspective (see Mas Giralt 2011) and if there has been, researchers concentrate mainly on the Latin American population in London (e.g. Carlisle, 2006, Gutierrez-Garza 2013, Kelsall, S. 2012, McIlwaine 2014, 2011, 2007, McIlwaine, Cock and Linneker 2011, Roman-Velazquez 1999). Indeed, the UK’s Latin American population is at its biggest in London and most Latin Americans come first to London. However, there are many Latin Americans who came directly to other cities in the UK, as well as those who – after having stayed in London – decided to move to

other cities. Latin American ‘communities’ are also relatively big in Liverpool, Oxford, Cambridge, Manchester, Bristol, Milton Keynes, Aberdeen, Newcastle, Glasgow and Edinburgh¹. One can therefore also address Latin American migration within the UK as a whole.

This thesis looks at Latin Americans who have come directly to Edinburgh as their first destination in the UK, as well as those who first came to another country or to London – or to one of the aforementioned cities in the UK – and later decided to move to Edinburgh. When I use the terms ‘Latin America’ and ‘Latin American’, I am referring to a geographical region spanning across North America, the Caribbean, Central America and South America - where mainly Spanish or Portuguese are spoken² – and the people pertaining to this region.

In this thesis I aim to provide an enhanced understanding of the everyday life of migrants from Latin America in Edinburgh, and the different senses of belonging that different members of the Latin American ‘community’ develop at different stages of their lives. I look at Latin Americans’ own understandings of what it means to be ‘Latin American’ and how they negotiate between this knowledge and the ‘Latin American’/ ‘Latino’ constructs ascribed onto them. I examine their home-making processes and the role new technologies play in their lives. Five months into my fieldwork, I spoke to Manuel. We talked about his life in Edinburgh, and he told me:

There is nothing worse for a Latino to feel ‘rootless’³. I felt it for a while. And you feel horrible. Because ‘rootless’ means that you do not know where you belong. It is horrible. You don’t feel Ecuadorian or Scottish. You don’t know where you are from. It is like you lose your identity, something is taken from you. And it is very important for human beings to have identity. I, for example, when I began to speak with ‘Latinos’, I recuperated a lot. Living with Mexicans, going out with Chileans; you get together with

¹ Information based on the number of South Americans and Other North American categories in ‘Born Abroad’ in BBC News (2005, n.a) accessed online [02.01.2015] as well as being based on the interviews that I carried out in Edinburgh.

² This includes the following countries: Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Haiti, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Uruguay, and Venezuela. The term ‘Latin America’ also sometimes includes Puerto Rico, the French West Indies, and other islands of the West Indies where a Romance tongue is spoken. Occasionally the term is used to include Belize, Guyana, French Guiana, and Suriname (The Columbia Electronic Encyclopedia 2012).

‘Latinos’ because you share similarities. And this makes you feel that you are part of a community – a place that you come from. It is something human [...]

The conversation we had reminded me that at the core of this study lie the questions of ‘identity’, ‘community’, ‘belonging’ and ‘home-making’. While these concepts will be discussed in detail in this thesis, I would like to explain my choice of the use of the notion of ‘community’ in the next section of the introduction, as the term reoccurs frequently throughout different chapters.

There are a number of important questions to consider when carrying out research about Latin Americans in Edinburgh: How and why do people with diverse life trajectories, from all walks of life, coming from different countries in Latin America, with regional differences within those countries, of different ‘races’, ‘ethnicities’ – having different ways of being and thinking – come together as members of the Latin American ‘community’? Is it through the use of commonly accepted symbols, or through personal networks? What meanings do they attach to these symbols?

Being able to communicate in the same language(s) that one spoke as a child with a group of people in the country one migrated to is important, as one can deliver one’s messages and intentions in the most natural way. However, is speaking the same language with other people enough to create a sense of ‘togetherness’? Can Latin Americans consider this the bedrock of the Latin American ‘community’ in Edinburgh? What is it that often brings Spanish and Portuguese speaking Latin Americans together, but excludes the Spanish?

Gabriel García Márquez’s words ([1985]1997: 237) have been influential in my research and during my explorations of issues surrounding ‘identity’:

[H]uman beings are not born once and for all
on the day their mothers give birth to them, but
life obliges them over and over again to
give birth to themselves

With this in mind, in this study I hope to move beyond a static meaning of ‘identity’, and explore the dynamics of concurrent identities, their maintenance and reconstruction. I aim to explore how different types of identities emerge and change through one’s course of life. I look at how Latin American identity emerges and by what means it

is reinforced.

What is ‘community’?

If you were to speak with the Latin Americans among whom I conducted my research, many are likely to mention the Latin American ‘community’ and the different communities within it consisting of those coming from one sole country in Latin America, such as the Peruvian community, and about the varied meanings those communities have for them. We can consider the notion of ‘community’ to be both an ethnographic and analytical concept.

For me the notion of ‘community’ is dependent primarily on the ‘voices’ of individuals who have chosen to be members. In the case of my research, this means members of the Latin American ‘community’ in Edinburgh. Unlike Flores (2000), I am not treating the ‘community’ as an entity ‘in itself’. I am exploring the ‘social life’ of the Latin Americans in Edinburgh and how ‘social life’ is “farcical, chaotic, multiple, contradictory” (Rapport 1993: ix).

Flores (2000), when referring to the ‘Latino community’ in the USA, drew from Benedict Anderson’s notion of the ‘imagined community’. For him,

The “Latino community” is an “imagined community”- to summon Benedict Anderson’s well-worn though useful phrase - a compelling present-day example of a social group, etched and composed out of a larger, impinging geopolitical landscape. The role of the social imagination and the imaginary in the self-conception of nationally, ethnically, and “racially” kindred groups is of course central, but must always be assessed with a view toward *how* they are being imagined (i.e., from “within” or “without”) and to what ends and outcomes.

(Flores 2000: 193)

The author suggests that ‘community’ is a concept that depends on the point of view or position of the group i.e. there exists a “Latino community” as well as “a “community” in the Latino sense of the world” (ibid.: 92-193). Following along these lines, Flores drew attention to the semantic construction of the notion of ‘community’. As such, the word ‘community’, in Spanish *comunidad*, has been constructed of two notions: ‘común’ and ‘unidad’ (ibid.: 193). Both terms have a similar meaning but are not

equivalent to one another. ‘Común’ relates to “sharing - that is, those aspects in the cultures of the various constitutive groups that overlap” (ibid.: 193). ‘Unidad’ is the sense of “bond[ing] the groups above and beyond the diverse particular commonalities” (ibid.: 193). “The Latino “experience”, the group’s demonstrable reality and existence” (ibid.: 193), incorporates its self-awareness, however it is not equivalent i.e. ‘común’ exemplifies “the community *in* itself”, whereas “unidad” refers to “the community *for* itself - the way that it thinks, conceives of, imagines itself” (ibid.: 193). Kelsall (2012) applied Flores’ definition of the ‘Latino community’ to describe the ‘Latino community’ in the UK, especially in London, and to scrutinise how it is imagined in London by mainly migrants from Colombia, but also by other migrants from Spanish-speaking Latin America. She looked at the representation of the “community’ ‘for itself’ [...] on the basis of shared memory and desire, congruent histories and meshing utopias” (ibid.: 25).

I believe that a Latin American ‘community’ exists in Edinburgh, perceived differently from each individual’s perspective, a ‘community’ that individuals choose to belong to and whose members share what Flores (2000) describes as ‘unidad’, a sense of bonding. However, a bond not of the groups but of individuals who are part of various groups and who continuously negotiate what he or she thinks, conceives of the Latin American community in Edinburgh and how he or she sees himself or herself within it. Drawing on Amit and Rapport (2002), it is my intention to look in this thesis at the Latin American ‘community’ as a construct that one individually chooses to belong to or not.

Cultural communities do not exist in themselves, do not possess their own energies, momentum or agency [...] communities may represent themselves to themselves, as well as to others, as homogenous and monolithic, as a priori, but this is an idiom only, a gesture in the direction of solidarity, boundedness, and continuity. The reality is of heterogeneity, process and change: of cultural communities as diverse symbolizations which exist by virtue of individuals’ ongoing interpretations and interactions.

(Amit and Rapport 2002: 7-8)

Individuals are free to choose to belong, or not, to a particular cultural community (ibid.: 8) and to choose the cultural attachment (ibid.: 108). It is individuals who continually construct, reconstruct and sustain “cultural worlds” by means of their “creative cognitions” (ibid.: 140). Individuals, through their interactions with each

other, create and sustain communities. They “symbolically articulate and animate them at particular times and places. Cultural communities are symbolizations which exist by virtue of individuals’ ongoing exchange” (ibid.: 140). I discuss the ‘Latin American community’ as a ‘symbolic construction’ with its ‘boundaries’ and common ‘forms’ to which people attach their own meanings (Anthony Cohen 1985: 20), as well as pay attention to the role of everyday life’s consociation in evoking the feeling of ‘togetherness’ (Amit and Rapport 2002).

Keeping the above in mind, various individuals of different nationalities belong to and attend the events organised by members of the ‘communities’ known as *Peruanos en Edimburgo* [‘Peruvians in Edinburgh’], *Venezolanos en Escocia* [‘Venezuelans in Scotland’], *Mexicanos en Edimburgo* [‘Mexicans in Edinburgh’], ‘the Latin American society’ as well by other ‘communities’ and ‘societies’. Some individuals belong to one ‘community’, others to more. There are those Latin Americans who have built social relationships at these events. Some of them only meet with other members of various ‘communities’ during the formal events. Some others joined some ‘groups’ of shared interest within the ‘communities’ – such as, for instance, a singing group called ‘Latin America sings in Edinburgh’, or a football team that was created by the members of the ‘Latin American society’ at the University of Edinburgh, to which both students and non-students from various Latin American countries belong. Other individuals developed their relationships on more personal levels, no longer related to the community’s symbolic markers or group’s common interests.

Structure of fieldwork and methodology

I commenced my fieldwork in October 2013. I did not travel physically far away as I conducted my research in the place where I was living before starting my investigation, however I think that from the moment I was permitted to ‘go on fieldwork’, my ‘journey’ began. I started perceiving Edinburgh differently, acknowledging things and visiting places that I had not taken much notice of before. There was a constant interchanging of departure into my field as well as a return to my ‘life’. However, in my mind I was constantly ‘in the field’, dwelling on the things I observed, thinking about

what I had to do next, where to go and with whom to meet. And what exactly does ‘field’ mean? Gupta and Ferguson (1997: 13) argue that:

After all, if ‘the field’ is most appropriately a place that is ‘not home’, then some places will necessarily be more ‘not home’ than others, and hence more appropriate, more ‘field-like’.

Pink (2000: 99) argues that the ‘field’ is concurrently ‘everywhere and nowhere’, and the research is to be seen as the investigator’s conscious creation of “anthropological knowledge; that is, (re)-classifying interaction as research”. Fieldwork is thus to be understood as being integrated into the researcher’s other life spheres (ibid.: 99). With the above in mind, has my research been carried out ‘at home’? Yes and no. I came to Edinburgh in 2008, however most of my life I had spent in Warsaw. I am an immigrant in the UK and do not feel ‘at home’ here, but neither do I feel ‘at home’ in Poland. Both places are at the same time close and distant to me. However, my husband and children live in Edinburgh, so I *could* call the place where we are living now ‘home’. The boundaries between anthropologists’ ‘home’ and ‘field’ are blurred. ‘Home’ has been presumed by some fieldworkers to be fixed, whereas the field has been seen as ‘a journey away’ (Amit 2000: 8). However, both presumptions are incomplete because “frequent migrants and travellers themselves, for many academics home is as peripatetic and multi-sited as fieldwork has increasingly come to be” (ibid.: 8). My ‘field’ – after I had finished my research – became, to draw on Amit (2000: 9), an integral part of my ‘biography’ and of my understanding of the world. During my fieldwork, I made friends with some people among whom I conducted the research and I am still in contact with them today.

I conducted my research in Edinburgh. Even though I carried out the research in one city, I did what Marcus (1998: 90) calls a “multi-sited research”. My fieldwork involved constantly visiting different places, following the Latin Americans among whom I carried out my research.

Multi-sited research is designed around chains, paths, threads, conjunctions, or juxtapositions of locations in which the ethnographer establishes some form of literal, physical presence with an explicit, posited logic of association or connection among sites that in fact defines the argument of the ethnography.

(Marcus 1998: 90)

In order to explore and to construct ‘the field’, I stayed in frequent contact with various

members of the Latin American ‘community’, in person as well as by use of email, text message and Facebook. The Latin Americans among whom I conducted my research did not stay in one place. I visited them at their homes that are dispersed throughout Edinburgh. I met with them and attended different events, both formal and informal, in different places across Edinburgh.

The ethnographic ‘field’, [...], has always been as much characterized by absences as by presences and hence necessitated a variety of corresponding methods [...] This kind of methodological flexibility has become all the more crucial as the contexts in which anthropologists seek to conduct fieldwork have changed. Anthropologists have rarely been the only ones arriving and leaving their field sites. But today, the people whom they are trying to study are increasingly likely to be as mobile if not more so than the ethnographers trying to keep up with them.

(Amit 2000: 12)

The Latin Americans in Edinburgh among whom I conducted my research were mobile. They gathered with their friends in different places. They spent their free time in some other places. They were constantly moving. Some changed their flats and moved to another part of the city. During my fieldwork many went on holiday or to visit their family and friends in other countries or cities in the UK. I had to find suitable fieldwork research methods that would allow me “to site their activities, their sense of self, their homes, their work and relationships” (Amit 2000: 16).

Beyond my ‘multi-sited’ ethnographic approach, I also conducted participant observation in a number of those settings. I also carried out numerous ‘life story interviews’ and both monitored and participated in various common forms of electronic communication. With some Latin American friends among whom I also conducted research, I used to meet frequently and they were telling me different stories from their past and present lives. I recorded most of the ‘life story interviews’ after people I interviewed consented to record them and to use the material for my research. I did not want to record all of the day-to-day conversations, meetings and events I took part in as I hoped that people I talked to would behave in a more relaxed and ‘natural’ manner, knowing that I was not recording them. I kept a diary in which I described where I went, with whom I spoke and the order of things that happened. I wrote my observations and any thoughts that came to my mind about my research.

Before my fieldwork, I hardly ever used Facebook. However, this changed after I began my research. Given that the members of the Latin American ‘community’ communicate on Facebook in various groups, I began to use it as well. I joined different groups to be informed about the upcoming events but also to see what people discuss and who was who among the ‘members’ of these groups. I contacted many people through Facebook and carried out ‘life story interviews’ in various places. I chose some of the interview locations, but sometimes the people with whom I met chose the places where they wanted to meet with me. This enabled me to see what types of places the people I spoke to like visiting, and where they feel comfortable talking about their lives. And so I met in various cafes, restaurants, pubs, parks, flats and houses across the whole of Edinburgh, including my own flat.

As Sarah Pink (1999: 112-3) emphasised, one should consider how ‘electronic communication’ works in connection with other types of communication, instead of concentrating on the differences between ‘face-to-face’ and ‘electronic communication’. During my fieldwork I noticed that Facebook, email and Skype communications supplemented face-to-face communication. It allowed me to see various members of the Latin American ‘community’ as individuals, and the multiple roles each of them performed on various occasions (cf. Goffman 1959, Rapport 1993, Wade 2010), whether as parents, friends, ‘members’ of the groups of common interest; as those who claim their national identity and as those who are ‘Latin Americans’.

‘Life story interviews’ and the meetings that I arranged through Facebook enabled me to meet personally with more members of the Latin American ‘community’. I knew some of them personally, as we attended the same events or parties. Others I had never met before these meetings. The conversations were a good starting point for me to hear about people’s lives, and to answer some questions about my own life and the project I was carrying out. People wanted to know where am I from, where did I learn to speak Spanish and how long have I been living in Edinburgh. Some enquired about other people I had already met and what they told me. Many also asked about my son as his photograph was on my Facebook profile.

The first meetings let me get to know people among whom I carried out research much better. When I later attended some events or met in bigger groups I already knew some people. A ‘life story’, as Atkinson (1998: 8) argues, is:

the story a person chooses to tell about the life he has lived, told as completely and honestly as possible, what is remembered of it, and what the teller wants others to know of it, usually as a result of a guided interview by another.

In life story interviews, the interviewee plays the role of the ‘storyteller’; he is the “narrator of the story being told”. The interviewer here is “a guide, or director” (Atkinson 1998: 8-9). “The two together are collaborators, composing and constructing a story the teller can be pleased with” (ibid.: 8-9). In life stories, one’s “memories, experiences and collective values are kept alive” (ibid.: 8). As Atkinson (1998: 9) wrote:

A life story is a fairly complete narrating of one’s entire experience of life as a whole, highlighting the most important aspects. [It]⁴ gives us the vantage point of seeing how one person experiences and understands life, his or her own especially, over time.

It was the people I spoke with and their life trajectories that shaped my thesis and emphasised the themes that I am exploring within the thesis. It helped me that some people that I had not met before agreed to meet with me, because I was able to refer to my Latin American friends and to some places that I go to that I knew they also visited. This helped to build trust and show people that I am not a complete ‘outsider’. Furthermore, many Latin American friends of mine asked their friends whether they would agree to help me with my project. And later on I asked people with whom I met – both personally during interviews, and also during informal occasions – whether they could introduce me to their friends.

I uploaded my son’s photograph on Facebook at the beginning of my fieldwork, even though I normally do not do this as I do not have any need to ‘show the world’ my private life. The reason I uploaded his photograph was to position myself as someone who has a child. This was useful when I wanted to speak with some couples separately, or when I contacted some men who I knew were in relationships, and in order for them to speak freely with me – without their partners being jealous of a strange woman

⁴ own brackets.

contacting their husbands or boyfriends. They knew I had a family and so with many of them there were no problems surrounding me speaking with them. The photo of my son, Anthony, was especially useful when I wanted to position myself as a mother with a child when coming into contact with Latin American men I had no intentions of dating. At times, I was also able to show a photograph of Anthony and say: “Oh look and this is my son. Isn’t he cute?”

My son was an integral part of my fieldwork experience. He went with me to various meetings and events. He played with the children of some friends from the Latin American ‘community’ who are also mothers while I was having coffee and conversations about various aspects of my project. Anthony went with me to some birthday parties, baby showers, barbecues and some events such as *la Posada*⁵, organised by the *Mexicanos en Edimburgo* [‘Mexicans in Edinburgh’] society at the University of Edinburgh, where there were also some other children in attendance.



Figure ii Photograph taken by Maria of the barbeque during the Meadows Festival

⁵ “religious festival celebrated in Mexico between December 16 and 24. Las Posadas commemorates the journey that Joseph and Mary made from Nazareth to Bethlehem in search of a safe refuge where Mary could give birth to the baby Jesus” (The Editors of Encyclopaedia Britannica 2014).

Similarly to Amit-Talai's (1989: 151) work on the Armenians in London, where the author emphasises that she has not carried out "a study of London as a city but a study of Armenians as they have experienced London", my study is about Latin Americans as they have experienced Edinburgh. However, I would like to underline that this thesis is written – by me – about the Latin American experiences and their self-definition, and is reflected through my personal experience within the fieldwork carried out. How I positioned myself and who I am had an impact on the fieldwork data that I gathered.

I found talking about the life experiences and life stories of other people to be a very difficult task, therefore in this thesis I have included, along with my analysis, the excerpts of the interviews and conversations from my fieldwork. And hopefully I have given 'voice' to the people whom I met during my fieldwork. Being able to represent someone other than oneself is a very powerful tool. I found it particularly challenging conveying the life experiences of refugees, people with 'unregulated status', and those who were abused. In the interests of these people, I have changed their names and did not include some of the details from their life experiences, in order to make it as anonymous as possible. Some other names in the thesis were also changed, as certain people did not want to be recognised.

The other aspect is that people who came to the UK as political exiles brought with them sad and painful memories, and after so many years they still remember about all the events that happened in their lives. And it may be very painful to talk about these events. It is akin to someone trying to open a wound that has partially healed over the years, as one person commented. However, one person who came as a Chilean political exile to the UK and now lives in Edinburgh agreed to speak with me. And I am very grateful for his time and willingness to speak with one more person about his life.

I also believe that music, along with (or without) its lyrics, together with various sounds, can better convey the Latin American 'community' members' life experiences. Therefore, in the appendix of my thesis below I have incorporated lyrics, songs and compositions that the members of the Latin American 'community' themselves talked about or played to me on various occasions during my fieldwork when discussing

various subjects. For the sole purpose of the thesis examination, I have included a CD with various tracks in the same order the reader reads my thesis. I hope listening to these music tracks can help me demonstrate to my readers the intangible aspects of my research, such as the emotions of the people I spoke to and spent time with, and the atmosphere of various events that I participated in.

Chapter Outline

This thesis is organised into an introduction, seven chapters and a conclusion. The introduction provides the reasons for the project and an overview of its research (with its main conceptual and theoretical foci). It explains methodology, sets the research within the field of anthropology and lays out the narrative progression of the thesis as a whole. The first chapter sets the scene for the thesis by describing the historical and present context of Latin American migration. As Galeano (1997 [1973]: 264-265) emphasised, to comprehend the present it is important to look at the past and make it alive again. Within this context, I begin with a short analysis of how European migration to Latin America has reversed to Latin Americans migrating to Europe. I subsequently look at the geo-political context of Latin American migration to the UK and introduce Latin American migration to Edinburgh. Afterwards, I present the ‘legal grounds for entry’ of Latin Americans to the UK and finish with the reasons for migration of two individuals and the decisions they made in order to come to the UK. Based on ideas from Mignolo (2005) and others, in Chapter 2 I look at the historical construction of the ‘idea of Latin America’ (Mignolo 2009) and the term ‘Latino’. I subsequently discuss ‘Latin American’ as a political and sensorial identity in relation to some Latin Americans in the UK who would like ‘Latin American’ to become officially recognised as an ethnic minority group. Afterwards, I explore identity “through relation to the Other” (Hall 1996: 4) and finish the chapter by looking at the moments when one feels as if they are from ‘nowhere’. Drawing on Braidotti (2011) and others, the third chapter will explore the sense of “nomadic identity” among Latin Americans in Edinburgh. It will begin by considering identity to be a personal journey, followed by

examining a collective system of representation seen through the eyes of an individual and his personal boundaries. Drawing on Classen (2005) and others, Chapter 4 will explore 'Latin American dynamics', highlighting the importance of non-verbal communication among Latin Americans. It will also discuss the use of stereotypes in the construction of 'Latin American-ness'. Focusing on the work of Cohen (1985) and others, Chapter 5 will explore the Latin American 'community' in Edinburgh and the voluntary belonging of its members. It will also address different meanings of the Day of the Dead event and of death as a shared symbol by various Latin American individuals. The last section of the chapter looks at how some Latin Americans operate between different scales of migration location, as well as how they took different paths and at different moments of their stay in Edinburgh (and for their own reasons) started coming into contact with other Latin Americans. Chapter 6 will continue looking at the Latin American community, however it will scrutinise the role of new communication technologies such as Facebook, WhatsApp and Skype for strengthening the sense of belonging to the Latin American community for particular individuals, and enforcing the sense of 'Latin America-ness' by maintaining strong bonds with one's families through the use of those technologies. The final chapter, drawing on Rapport (1998), Howes and Classen (2014) and others, will examine the home-making processes of Latin Americans, along with their sensory aspects and the understandings of home for various Latin Americans. The conclusion concentrates on final remarks. The following chapters are devoted to various theoretical concepts. However, I aim to interweave them with the ethnography and the life stories of some of the Latin Americans in Edinburgh whom I met during my fieldwork. I hope that their voices will be 'heard' in this thesis.

What about migration?

People travel around the world searching for 'home'.⁶ The reasons why people have been immigrating are manifold and complex. It is sad that we open borders to the flow of money and goods, however we close it to the movement of human beings, the passage of people (Galeano 2005). For immigrants though, borders are intangible, and if

⁶ The notions of 'home' and 'home-making' processes are discussed in Chapter 7.

it is made stricter for them to reach the destination of their choice one will not think of it as being impossible but rather more difficult. One's journey begins with migration. Arriving to a new place is "both the end of a journey and the beginning of another - of life in a new place" (Knowles and Harper 2009: 2).

Some argue that 'migration' is a phenomenon that is interrelated with historic, economic, political, social and cultural processes on a global level, linked at different stages in the history of capitalism and the creation of the world system (e.g. Glick-Schiller 2009, Yépez del Castillo 2014, Wallerstein 1974). Glick-Schiller (2012), for instance, believes that 'migration' should be discussed in relation to global power relations. Yépez del Castillo (2014) and Massey *et al.* (1993) underline that demographic scenarios are affected in manifold ways by the developed asymmetries between countries and regions, and as a consequence lead to migration. On the other hand, Rapport (2003: 67) claims that

individuals are not determined by prior or extraneous conditions but are always in active relationship with them [...] the conditions and the experience achieve a certain form and meaning at one and the same time: the conditions are only what they are experienced to be, while the individual self emerges out of the act of experiencing the world.

It is individual consciousness that generates the meaning of the world. Each individual has the freedom to imagine and form his own individual destinies (Rapport 2003: 53). Individuals should therefore be seen as "self-motivated rather than socially-driven" (Cohen 1994: 136 in Rapport 2003: 28). Here arises a question of the role of external forces and personal agency on the migration decisions. I believe that the historical and geo-political contexts of Latin American migration, as well as Latin American migrants' 'legal grounds for entry' to the UK – which I present in Chapter 1 – are the factors that have affected migrants' motives for migration. However, the decisions to migrate are made by individuals, and it is their life experiences – which differ greatly – that I focus on throughout this thesis. I finish the following chapter by examining Victor and Ana's reasons for migration, as opposed to 'legal grounds for entry'. The section presents two individuals who migrated to Edinburgh. Victor, who came to the UK when he was a child as a result of his family's decision to migrate to the UK and Ana who decided to come to the UK with her husband. Both individuals came to the UK due to, drawing on Vered Amit (2010: 202-3), idiosyncratic "choices" in Victor's case made by

his parents, and in Ana's case made by her and her husband. However, those "choices" were also influenced by "much larger systemic factors", such as the described 'legal grounds for entry' to the UK, historical and geo-political contexts, and the job market for Ana and her husband, as well as "by more specific aspects of [their] respective circumstances and backgrounds" that they used in "responses to events and persons" (ibid.: 202-3).

In terms of the level of analysis that I provide in the thesis, I concentrate mainly on a local level. Large-scale migration flows

are mirrors of mass migration and both can and should be employed in order to understand the majority of migration today. But there are deviant tendencies that tell us something else about today's world: individuals *do* migrate.

(Møller 2009: 14)

By looking in depth at particular individuals, I hope to destabilise "the most problematic connotations of culture: homogeneity, coherence, and timelessness" (Abu-Lughod 1991: 476). Abu-Lughod (1991) argues that the concept of 'culture' imposes separation and creates differences between people. One should therefore find means of writing "against culture" and use instruments that she calls "ethnographies of the particular" (ibid.: 466). These are the "detailed histories of individuals and their relationships" in which all the particulars that are vital to the constitution of one's own experience are presented (ibid.: 466). Each individual has his own 'life-project', which is "[the] kind of self-theorizing and self-intensity that affords an individual life a directionality and a force" (Rapport 2003: 34). 'Life-project' is about an individual's world-views in which one achieves particular goals more so than anything else and sometimes overcomes obstacles by consciously accomplishing certain objectives (ibid.: 34). As Rapport explains, drawing from Devereux's phenomenon of ego-syntony⁷, "the threads of different individuals' lives are interwoven, and they meet one another [...] in talking-relationships of greater and lesser familiarity and frequency" (Rapport 1993: 169).

During my fieldwork I observed a vast range of 'ways of being', as well as contradictory responses and views of some members of the Latin American 'community' in Edinburgh at different moments of their lives. Social interactions in

⁷ Further explained in Chapter 5.

everyday life are like a theatre “performance”, where an individual “presents himself and his activity to others” (Goffman 1959: 9). Individuals act out different roles and “give a particular impression” (ibid.: 17). At the same time, those who ‘perform’ are also an audience to the viewers (ibid.: 17). Social life is “chaotic, multiple, contradictory” (Rapport 1993). These complex, multiple and contradictory ways of being and thinking of various members of the Latin American ‘community’ in Edinburgh are what I want to present in this thesis.

Chapter 1 - The context

The historical context

European migration to Latin America

The history of European and Latin American migration demonstrates how rapidly countries and regions are able to change from being the immigration recipient countries to countries of emigration (Pellegrino 2004: 5). European migration to Latin America began with the European colonisation of Latin America in 1492 and lasted for three and a half centuries. It is estimated that between 1500 and 1800 around one million Europeans came to what is now called Latin America, a small number if compared with local populations found there, but enough “in order to impose languages, cultures, religions and institutions” (Bacci 2012: 62 in Yépez del Castillo 2014: 3 own translation).

As Yépez del Castillo (2014) outlines, colonisation transformed the economy, the society and the politics for the colonial order that retained their ethno-racial hierarchies during the Republican period, in which the elites placed “Indians”, African and Asian immigrants at the bottom of the social hierarchy, introducing policies to attract European immigration. The fascination of the Latin American elites with the “European Whites” led to this type of immigrants being favoured. The same was in relation to the descendants of Africans and Asians, who were considered to be ‘undesirable aliens’ by the constitutions and regulations on foreigners that were in force until 1930 in several

countries of Latin America and the Caribbean (Schwarz 2012 in Yépez del Castillo 2014: 3).

The second migration wave to Latin America occurred between 1830 and 1930 and is related to significant demographic and socioeconomic changes and political and military conflicts in Europe during this period (Yépez del Castillo 2014: 3). In the nineteenth and twentieth century it was Europeans, mostly from the southern part of Europe, who migrated to Latin America and the Caribbean (Moya in Padilla and Peixoto 2007). Between 1820 and 1932, more than 6 million Europeans, mainly from Spain, Italy and Portugal migrated to Argentina and more than 4 million to Brazil (Moya in Padilla and Peixoto 2007). Other Europeans, for example Germans, Poles, and Ukrainians, also migrated, albeit on a smaller scale (ibid.). Significant numbers of immigrants also came to Chile, Mexico and Uruguay (Solimano 2009: 6).

According to Yépez del Castillo (2014), European migration to Latin America during the second migration wave was triggered by similar factors to those that stimulated European migration flows to the USA and Canada during the same period. The work and living conditions offered to European migrants were better than in their countries of origin, which at that time were going through the process of agricultural industrialisation and modernisation (ibid: 3). Brazil, for instance, encouraged European immigration because they perceived it as a means of “whiten[ing]” its population once slavery was abolished” (Padilla and Peixoto 2007). The availability of jobs in Latin America, high salaries, the attractive immigration policies and advantages, such as access to land, attracted many Europeans to immigrate to Latin America (ibid). For other Europeans, migration to Latin America was seen as an escape from traditionally strongly hierarchical societies (Pellegrino 1995). At the beginning of the 19th century, the Spanish and Portuguese colonial era finished and most Latin American countries gained independence between 1810 and 1830; other countries achieved independence after World War II (ibid.). In the second half of the 19th century, and at the beginning of the 20th century, many Spanish and Portuguese emigrants returned after either earning a lot of money or not succeeding in doing so (ibid.). While European immigration to Latin America was based mainly on labour migration, one must remember that European migration to Latin America was also influenced by political reasons, such as

the Spanish exile at the end of the Spanish Civil War of 1936-39⁸ (Yépez del Castillo 2014: 4).

The third stage of the European-Latin American migration occurred between 1946 and 1958. During this period around two million Europeans moved mainly to Venezuela, Chile and Cuba. European immigrants were attracted by the growth of Latin American agricultural exports and demand for labour (Yépez del Castillo 2014: 4-5). This trend decreased in the 1950s and 60s, as the wages in Latin America started decreasing in comparison with those in Europe, and since the 1950s became even lower than in the European countries (Solimano 2009: 6). It is estimated that in the 1950s and 1960s around 50,000 Europeans per year returned to their countries of origin (Khoudour-Casteras 2005)⁹.

Latin American emigration to Europe

Yépez del Castillo (2014) outlines that the history of Latin American emigration to Europe is much shorter than European migration to Latin America. It has been happening for over sixty years. Migration from Latin America began in the 1960's with migration to the USA after many years of being a host region to Europeans, Africans and Asians. In the next decade, besides the historical importance of transatlantic immigration, two other migration patterns emerged – mainly inter-regional migration – within Latin America – and extra-regional migration, mainly to the USA and Europe (ibid.: 2).

Khoudour-Casteras (2005: 114) outlines that in the 1970s and 1980s, Latin Americans migrated to Europe, mainly to its southern part – to Spain, Italy and Portugal. However, the author emphasises that one can talk about the migration flows being reversed from migration to Latin America to migration to Europe in the 1980s and 90s. The migration

⁸ To read for instance on Spanish intellectuals who went into exile in Mexico after General Franco's victory during the Spanish Civil War, see Faber, S. (2002) *Exile and Cultural Hegemony: Spanish Intellectuals in Mexico, 1939-1975*. Nashville: Vanderbilt University Press.

⁹ I would also be interested as a different project to look at the life trajectories of Latin Americans of Scottish decent or Scottish-born who lived in Latin America and returned to Scotland.

movements within Latin America to neighbouring countries were enforced by a complicated political situation in the region; many coup d'états unfolded up to the late 1980s and the following years of repression (ibid.: 114). What is more, many Latin Americans sought political refuge in Europe, mainly in the United Kingdom, Spain, France, Switzerland, Germany (Ayuso 2009), the Scandinavian countries, and Portugal (Padilla and Peixoto 2007). The persecution of president Allende, the opposition to the Pinochet regime, after the 1974 coup, explains why many Chileans immigrated in the 1980s (Khoudour-Casteras 2005: 115).



Figure 1.1 A photograph of Carlos' symbolic vote against Pinochet staying as a president (www.carlosarredondo.com)

All the aforementioned countries turned into popular migration destinations for what were mainly Chileans, Argentineans, Uruguayans, and Brazilians between the 1960s and the 1980s. Many of the immigrants from Latin America who left their home region were highly educated and were able to find jobs in their new countries (Padilla and Peixoto 2007). The flow of political refugees from Latin America to Europe led to the diversification of the origin and destination countries of the migration movement (ibid.). Immigration from Central America (from Nicaragua, el Salvador, Guatemala) to Mexico and Costa Rica was particularly triggered during the 1970s and 1980s by the civil wars (Khoudour-Casteras 2005: 115). Immigration from Central America under refugee or exile status was also to the United States and to Canada (Ecke 2013, Gammage 2007). However, in the 1980s a number of people from Central America also

gained refugee status in Australia (around 3,000) and in Europe. For instance, over 3,000 Salvadorians were granted refugee status in Italy and Sweden (Gammage 2007). The armed conflict in Colombia which began in 1964 led to the highest migration flows escaping violence (Khoudour-Casteras 2005: 115). Many Colombians have been migrating to Venezuela (Bermudez-Torres 2003) and to the USA (Guarnizo 2003) but also to Europe, mainly to Spain and the UK (Bermudez-Torres 2003). Spain and the UK have the two biggest communities of Colombians in Europe (Pellegrino 2004).

Apart from political refugees, thousands of highly qualified Latin American immigrants came to Spain and Portugal during the 1980s. Many dentists from Argentina and Uruguay travelled to live in Spain. Portugal received an influx of well-educated Brazilians set to work in the marketing and health care industries (Padilla and Peixoto 2007). It was a period in which immigration policies in Spain and Portugal were adjusted easily to the demand of the labour market. Skilled migrants contributed to the countries' technical knowledge when they prepared to join the European Economic Community¹⁰ in 1986 (Padilla and Peixoto 2007).

Major economic changes in Southern Europe began in the 1980s. After Spain and Portugal joined the EU, both countries went through strong economic growth but also underwent restructuring of the economic and labour markets. Latin American and Caribbean immigrants in Spain and Portugal facilitated the servicing of the labour markets, initially for the skilled worker – and then for the less-skilled worker – niches (Padilla and Peixoto 2007). The general demand for labour has increased in Spain, Portugal and Italy, and this includes demand for irregular migrants. They very often carry out jobs in the construction, agriculture, hospitality, catering, and cleaning industries; these are often jobs that natives generally do not service (Padilla and Peixoto 2007). What is more, the demand for “traditionally feminine labour in domestic care for the elderly and domestic and industrial cleaning” has been a specific “pull factor” for immigrant women (ibid.).

In the countries with strong historical and cultural ties to Latin America, such as Spain, Portugal and Italy, the number of Latin American migrants has increased drastically.

¹⁰ current European Union.

For example, only between 1995-2003, the Latin American population in Spain rose from 92,642 to 514,485 (Pellegrino 2004: 6). Indeed, if dual nationals and irregular migrants are included, the actual figure would be much higher (ibid.: 6). In the 1990s some of the Latin American and Caribbean migration patterns to the EU became visible. In Spain the number of Ecuadorians, Colombians and Peruvians grew significantly (Córdova Alcaraz 2012:17). Migration flows in Spain were diversified until the economic recession in 2008 (McIlwaine 2011a: 7). Of the total amount of Latin American immigrants, Italy has the highest number of Peruvians and Ecuadorians (Valencia- León 2005: 291). In Portugal the biggest Latin American migrant group is formed by Brazilians (Serviço de Estrangeiros e Fronteiras SEF 2004 in Padilla 2007).

The Geo-political context

In the first part of the chapter I looked at European migration to Latin America and Latin American migration to Europe, in order to show connections between the two migration flows and the choice of migration countries that Latin Americans have made when migrating to Europe. The most significant influx of migrants has been happening since 2000, with Latin Americans migrating mainly to Spain, Italy and Portugal due to historical and cultural reasons such as post-colonial bonds, language similarities and “push and pull factors” (Khoudour-Casteras 2005, Alonso 2008, Peixoto 2009, Lafleur 2011, McIlwaine 2011). This is the reason that academic work on Latin American migrants has focused mainly on these countries (Lafleur 2011). Nevertheless, other European countries such as the UK, Germany (Solimano 2009: 5), the Netherlands, France, Sweden (Padilla and Peixoto 2007) and Belgium (Lafleur 2011) have also observed increases in Latin American migration.

One can talk about a particular relationship between Latin America, the Caribbean, Spain, Portugal and Italy due to special cultural and historical bonds, which have led to Latin American immigrants in these countries being treated more favourably than other nationalities – as far as legal treatment is concerned (Padilla and Peixoto 2007). For instance, Spain and Portugal established in 1991 the “Ibero-American community of nations”, which consists of Portugal, Spain and former Portuguese and Spanish colonies

in Latin America. Apart from some favoured diplomatic links, its main role is an “annual meeting of heads of state” (Padilla and Peixoto 2007). Portugal also has various special agreements with Brazil, which assure additional political rights to Brazilians in Portugal and to Portuguese in Brazil. Spain’s major partnerships in two-sided labour recruitment programmes are with Latin American and Caribbean countries (Padilla and Peixoto 2007).

Latin Americans have also been encouraged to migrate to Spain and Portugal because Latin American citizens for a long time have been exempt from a need to apply for tourist visas when entering these countries. Also, the fact that in the EU the free movement of people has existed between its countries and individuals arriving from the Southern Cone (Argentina, Chile, Paraguay, Uruguay) and Brazil, has been an encouraging factor for migration from these countries (Padilla and Peixoto 2007). Also, those Latin American immigrants who hold EU passports have been attracted to immigrate to Europe as they can move freely between the EU Schengen zones.

Policies that permit dual citizenship, as well as obtaining citizenship grounded on ancestry (*jus sanguinis*), have enabled the descendants of many emigrants to legally come to Europe (Padilla and Peixoto 2007). Spain, Portugal and Italy became ‘home’ to an unknown number of Latin American and Caribbean dual citizens who can live and work in any EU Member State (*ibid.*). In Spain, the Civil Code enables Latin American nationals to obtain Spanish nationality after two years of continuous legal residence in the country. In Italy, foreign descendants of Italians – up to second generation – can apply for Italian citizenship (The Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs). For instance, Argentinian nationals who can demonstrate that their grandfather had Italian citizenship can also claim Italian citizenship.

According to Padilla and Peixoto (2007), current Latin American and Caribbean immigration to Southern Europe – mainly immigrants from South America – has been occurring mainly for economic reasons and to improve living standards (*ibid.*). This migration from Latin America reacts to the push factors for out-migration, which have existed for several decades but have now intensified (*ibid.*). These factors include “high unemployment and underemployment rates, political instabilities, and the weakening of

the welfare state, which has meant a decrease in social-services budgets, among other reasons” (ibid.). Moreover, the difference in income levels between Latin American countries and the migration destinations of the industrialised countries have been an important “push factor”. For instance the GDP per capita in dollars in 2003 in the USA was 37,388, in the Euro zone 26,704 and in Latin America and the Caribbean only 3,246 (World Bank 2005). According to Khoudour-Casteras (2005), emigration also reacts to economic cycles. It reacts to short-term disparities in economic activity. And it increases when lack of economic growth leads to increased unemployment.

Language similarities are the “colonial era’s main legacy” (Padilla and Peixoto 2007). Spanish is spoken in most of the South and Central American countries, and in Mexico; Portuguese is spoken in Brazil; and the numerous Caribbean island nations also took the languages of their former colonisers (ibid.). In Spain, language similarities facilitated the social integration of Latin American immigrants (Alonso 2008: 37). As Khoudour-Casteras (2005) drew from CEPAL¹¹ data, the emigration flows are greater in those countries where the same language as the country of origin is spoken. Belize and Guyana, where English is spoken, have the highest rate of immigrants to the USA in comparison to all other countries in Latin America and the Caribbean. Correspondingly, Spain has become one of the main migration destinations for Latin Americans in Europe (CEPAL 2002 in Khoudour-Casteras 2005: 117).

Family networks are an important feature of Latin American migration. Latin Americans very often build networks that facilitate welcoming new immigrants (Yépez del Castillo 2014: 7). The immigrants who first immigrate establish migration networks and later on help other relatives or friends with the process of immigration as well as helping former migrants who returned to their countries of origin and non-migrants who live there (Jokish and Pribilsky 2002: 79; Massey 1990: 7). The migration networks influence migrants’ decision for coming to the particular country. Some friends and family members help a relative or a friend who wants to immigrate with paying the cost of travel. They provide information on the job market as well as providing first-hand information on administrative tasks such as applying for a visa, finding accommodation

¹¹ In Spanish CEPAL, in English known as The United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean.

and explaining the government's social policies on relevant topics, such as access to education, health services and to social benefits (Khoudour-Casteras 2005: 118).

The United States has historically been Latin American immigrants' first choice destination (Guarnizo et al. 2003). Khoudour-Casteras (2005) argues that the geographic proximity of Mexico and the Central American countries to the USA explains higher emigration rates in the region. However, the number of Latin Americans migrating to Europe has increased, especially after the September 11th attacks in the United States when the USA introduced tighter border control regulations and changes in migration law which were intended to reduce the rates of undocumented migration. A certain immigration flow of Spanish, Italian and Portuguese citizens, mainly skilled ones seeking employment, to Latin America has once more been observed (Padilla and Peixoto 2007). Furthermore, many Latin Americans migrate to other European countries, or 'return home' to their countries of origin. Between June 2009 and November 2010, almost 34,000 people immigrated to Argentina from Spain and more than 6,000 emigrated to Chile and Uruguay (Khoudour-Casteras 2005: 3).

There are manifold experiences of Latin American immigrants in Europe and the various effects the migration has on each migrant's life. However, the historical and post-colonial bonds that emerged during European immigration to Latin America – and related to the specific agreements between European and Latin American countries – influence migrants' decision on where to migrate and how to accomplish it. Some Latin American citizens can gain entry easier to some European countries without needing a tourist visa, or they may apply for citizenship from one of the European countries and become holders of dual citizenship. Once in the Schengen zone it is easier for Latin American immigrants to move within Europe, either on EU passports or on a work permit obtained in the European country they first immigrated to.

Latin American Migration To UK- Settings

Direct colonial bonds between the UK and Spanish and Portuguese-spoken Latin America did not exist, however London has been home to numerous independence

leaders¹² for Spanish America and British companies granting loans to independent Latin American nations for state building projects (McIlwaine 2011; Miller 1998). Besides, some Latin American diplomats, businessmen, writers, artists and politicians¹³ lived in London in the 19th century, making it not only a place of political activity but also “a place for writing and involvement in the intellectual and social life of the capital” (Miller 1998: 10).

Nonetheless, the large-scale migration of Latin Americans occurred first due to the repression imposed by military governments in the 1960s and 70s, which led to an influx of refugees mainly from Brazil, Chile and Argentina (Miller 1998: 9), but also from Paraguay and Uruguay (based on an interview with Victor). This is connected chiefly with ‘Operation Condor’, which was formally established in 1975, but whose members had engaged with each other since the 1960s. It was “a secret intelligence and operations system [...] through which the South American regimes coordinated intelligence information and seized, tortured, and executed political opponents in combined cross-border operations” (McSherry 2002: 38). The main members were Chile, Argentina, Uruguay, Bolivia, Paraguay, and Brazil, subsequently joined by Ecuador and Peru (ibid.: 38). These countries were supported and assisted by the United States, which perceived them as allies in the Cold War¹⁴ (ibid.: 38). The militaries disobeyed “international law and traditions of political sanctuary to carry out their shared anti-communist crusade” (McSherry 1999: 144). Those refugees who fled military coups and repression in their own countries and came to neighbouring countries “disappeared” in joint transnational operations (ibid.: 144). “The regimes hunted down dissidents and leftists, union and peasant leaders, priests and nuns, intellectuals, students and teachers” (ibid.: 150). Many Latin Americans who faced dictatorships, repression and violence in their homelands sought refugee or asylum-seeker status in the UK, as it was considered a country where human rights were protected (McIlwaine 2007: 3).

¹² For more on the Latin American exile community, trade of Britain and Latin America and its financial connections, see Decho and Diamond (1998).

¹³ For example, Juan García del Río – a politician, diplomat and writer, Hippolyto da Costa – a journalist, Simón Bolívar and Francisco de Miranda – both political leaders – all stayed in London at some point of their lives (Miller 1998).

¹⁴ The USA with its NATO allies fought against the Soviet Union and the Warsaw Pact allies.

Many people have perceived the UK as a multi-cultural country with a reasonably stable economy, and thus immigrants have come here to seek employment and a stable and safe life. London particularly has been seen as one of the most important multi-national global cities in the world, and thus has attracted many people (ibid.: 3). Between 1974 and 1979, many migrants from Colombia came to the UK to work in low-skilled jobs in hotels, catering and hospitals through the work permit system (McIlwaine 2014: 4; McIlwaine 2007: 3). Colombians continued to arrive in the UK in the 1980s and 1990s, escaping armed conflict and seeking asylum in the UK, but also to join their families and relatives (Bermudez Torres 2008: 47). Subsequently, Ecuadorians and Peruvians also arrived during this period, mainly as economic migrants and asylum seekers, with more arrivals of Brazilians and Bolivians who came for economic reasons after the year 2000 (Bermudez Torres 2008: 47; Carlisle 2006; on Bolivians - Sveinsson (2007); on Ecuadorians - (James 2005)).

Latin Americans in Edinburgh¹⁵

It is extremely difficult to find out how many Latin Americans actually reside in Edinburgh. Many of them have Spanish, Italian or Portuguese passports. Some people's statuses have not been regulated. What is more, due to the fact that Latin Americans are not recognised in the UK as a minority group, they do not appear in statistics as a separate category. This under-recording related to irregularity, short-term migration and entry on European passports, as well as a lack of data makes it difficult to establish the size of the Latin American population in the UK (McIlwaine 2011). Furthermore, the variety of legal statuses of migrants (from high-skilled migrants with specific visa arrangements to undocumented immigrants) makes it harder to estimate the total migrant population (Lafleur 2011: 2). As I have mentioned before, in some European countries, access to citizenship for migrants from some Latin American countries is favoured, thus those migrants will not be visible in the Latin American migration statistics as these people are counted as European citizens (Tintori 2009 in Lafleur

¹⁵ For the demographic profile of Latin Americans in London, see McIlwaine, Cock, Linneker (2011) *No longer invisible: The Latin American community in London*. London: Trust for London. Available from: www.geog.qmul.ac.uk/docs/research/latinamerican/48637.pdf [accessed online on 17.01.2015].

2011). Some estimates from the Annual Population Survey in 2008 show that there were 130,186 Latin Americans living in the UK (McIlwaine, Cock and Linneker 2011: 4).

As far as the demographic profile of the Latin American migrants in Edinburgh is concerned, the people I met during my fieldwork in Edinburgh are mostly first generation migrants who came to Edinburgh as adults. There is also a second generation who range from babies, young children, teenagers and people in their twenties who were born in the UK or came to the UK a child, and a few people from the third generation. These are mainly small children. Their parents are now in their late forties and mid fifties. They were either born in the UK after their parents migrated to the UK, or came to the UK with them. Most second-generation migrants living in Edinburgh are still very young. Among members of the Latin American community in Edinburgh, I spoke to those who have been living in Edinburgh for more than 3 years; of these people, more are women. The majority are in their mid thirties and early forties, many of whom have babies. There is also a group of people who have been living in Edinburgh for over 15 years, with some even staying over 30 years. Among those there are a few approaching retirement. Most people are thus in the working age group. There are many Latin Americans in Edinburgh who are well-educated. They often initially work in a lower status job unrelated to their education because they do not have sufficient knowledge of English, or because their professional qualifications have not been recognised in the UK. However, there are also many qualified workers, especially in the oil industry, who from the beginning of their stay in the UK found the same job they carried out in their home countries. Some others, after living years in Edinburgh had improved their English so much that they gained qualifications at colleges or universities in Edinburgh and subsequently found better employment.

This study focuses on particular individuals and their life experiences; however it also acknowledges that the similar stage of the life course is one of the many impetuses that bring many Latin Americans together and gives to their ideas about being migrants a certain valence and significance. Most of the informants among whom I conducted my research are first-generation young adults. What many share is the fact that they did not see themselves as being far away from 'home' during their 20s or early 30s because of

emotional or/and financial reasons. They maintained strong family bonds with their parents and grandparents. Many had good jobs. They were in relationships. Like Maria from Peru who told me that when she was in her 20s she felt that ‘my idea of my world was complete’, she said.

Both my grandparents were alive, I had a good job, I managed to buy my own house a few years after graduation and I was in a happy relationship. However, I felt something was missing [...] Perhaps the value of family in Latin American culture, in a way, made me prioritise family first, and my personal goals second. After my grandfather's death, I felt it was the time to pursue my aspirations.

For many Latin Americans the death of a close family member triggered their decision to migrate and settle abroad. Some others migrated in search of new opportunities and many decided to settle down in Edinburgh when they met a partner and/or had a child.

What is important to mention is that many people with whom I interacted did not perceive themselves as immigrants. Maria told me: “During my time in Scotland I never saw myself as a migrant, but as a student since the main purpose for my residence in Scotland was to receive higher education”. The life course of people whom I met impacts how they shape their understandings of what it means to be a migrant but that does not mean that they all operate with a category ‘migrant’ when talking about themselves. Aileen, another friend of mine, also does not see herself and does not talk about herself as a migrant in our day-to-day conversations. She explained to me that she actually does not feel that she is one while living in Edinburgh. However, when I asked her what being migrant means to her she told me that

it represents being bicultural, when you know you come from another place, you tend to look for similarities to feel safe and happy. In my generation there are many new families changing their paths and starting their lives in new places because of the opportunities and the better way of life that some places represent to them. In my case, being from Mexico does not take out the idea of my culture and my expectations but I am learning to adopt this new culture and make it mine with all the positive views of both countries.

When taking an analytical perspective and categorising many people among whom I carried out my research as first-generation young adults one can see that those individuals are at a stage of their life course that is alike due to their similar age and the fact that they are foreign born individuals who moved to Edinburgh. Being first

generation provides life experiences to talk about that many share. They can discuss their routes that took them to Edinburgh. Common feelings between them are of coming from somewhere to one place - Edinburgh but at times feeling as if they are 'nowhere' at present. Most people also commented that it is possible to have and to construct two homes. "Because of the ties I made during those 7 years, I feel people can have two homes in any part of the world. People can 'fit in' or belong to any society as long as they make it their own", Maria told me. It seemed to be easier for many first-generation young Latin Americans to 'feel at home' while living in Edinburgh than it was for some people who arrived in Edinburgh when they were older. The latter frequently could not find themselves in Edinburgh and deeply missed their homeland¹⁶.

The reasons differed as to why the people whose lives in Edinburgh I studied migrated. Nonetheless, they had to go through a similar stage of leaving their country of origin or any other country in which they had previously lived, they had to familiarise themselves with entry regulations and how to obtain permission to stay in the UK. Then afterwards they had to learn about how life works in Edinburgh, for example, where to find a place to live, how to register with a doctor and how to enrol their children in a nursery or school. Some experienced an initial language shock because many came to Edinburgh with some knowledge of English but had to get used to understanding a strong Scottish accent. Many were not able to rely on their social capital before coming to Edinburgh as they were the first ones who moved here. They realised at different moments of their lives that they have a need to belong, or not to, to the Latin American 'community' in Edinburgh, share the 'Latin American dynamics' that has been discussed throughout the thesis and to build and maintain pseudo-familial networks that supplement or substitute the transnational bonds with their family.

Here I would like to stress that even though the majority of the Latin Americans whom I met were first-generation young adults, this did not restrict them from only interacting and making friendships with people of a similar age and their generation of migration. The similar age indeed brought many people closer as they move between similar roles, whether being husband, wife, mother, father, or work, study related roles, that they are all mostly familiar with and experienced similar life events at more or less same stage of

¹⁶ See Haran's 'home' p. 190.

their lives in Edinburgh be it graduating from a university, birth of children, marriage, death of parents, grandparents, finding work and family balance, and constructing their homes, to mention but a few. However, when they construct their social networks, and the social capital that is formed by these ties, they do it in manifold ways. Their personal networks also depend for instance on whether they get on well with the other person, whether they share common interests, values, some life experiences and also for some whether they see any positive effects and benefits while being part of the network. People whom I met are foremost humans above all the categorisations. They continuously form their senses of identity through different acts of identification where they are identifying themselves and being identified by others.

Many Latin Americans, as I observed, build connections based on whether personal social, neighbourhood, educational or professional networks. Being Latin American might be sufficient when coming together as Latin Americans and celebrating together as members of the Latin American ‘community’ in Edinburgh, however it is not the most important factor when they decide to build friendships and to maintain frequent contact with one another. There exist “multiple modes of incorporation” and “multiple pathways within each mode” (Glick Schiller et al 2006: 614) of how individuals whom I met incorporate themselves into the city of Edinburgh, “ethnic pathway” (ibid.: 614) is just one of them. It is also interesting that some people became linked to the Latin American ‘community’ through non-ethnic networks of friends, neighbours, colleagues at work and peers from university or college.

Many of the activities organised by different members of the Latin American ‘community’, even though they are linked with a specific nationality such as the events organised by the ‘Peruvians in Edinburgh’, enable participation that surpasses their national basis and attract people from other Latin American national groupings. Other organisations or groups are particularly organised around the Latin American identity such as the ‘Latin America sings in Edinburgh’. This group mobilises itself around this identity in order to share the ‘Latin American dynamics’, but also in order to raise awareness and knowledge about the region to those living in Edinburgh. Thus, to shape their senses of identification. The small numbers of Latin Americans who have settled in Edinburgh makes the growing Latin American identification in Edinburgh

significant. As there are not many people from some of the countries from the region such as for instance Bolivia, Ecuador or Paraguay, the Latin American identity offers an attractive form of pan-regional identification for some of those people who have a need to belong to an ethnic ‘community’ but who otherwise would not feel an affinity with members of any other ethnic ‘community’ in Edinburgh.

The Latin American ‘community’ is an ‘invisible community’ due to the fact that many Latin Americans self-classify themselves through different identities at different moments of their lives, including their national identities, and due to the city of Edinburgh’s scale that is “the ordering of sociospatial units within multiple hierarchies of power” (Glick Schiller and Çağlar 2011: 6). Edinburgh is a global city affected by global neoliberal processes that can be positioned within “hierarchies of political, economic, and cultural power that extend within and across nation-states” (ibid.: 63) that are experienced locally. The migrant settlement takes place within “specific spaces and are shaped by, as well as shape, the history as well as particular local practices and representation of those spaces” (ibid.: 63). Latin American migrants are dispersed throughout the city of Edinburgh. They live, work and meet in different parts of Edinburgh, with no particular district dominating, apart from students mainly concentrating near the universities and in the city centre. Nevertheless many told me that they feel welcomed here by the official bodies, city of Edinburgh council and its citizens. As I was finishing writing this thesis I observed that some Latin Americans found ‘their places’ where they are becoming more visible including more Latin American businesses that opened and others that evolved. Just to take one example, ‘ORINOCO Latin food’ expanded and has its stands at various street markets, is present at the Edinburgh festivals and in 2017 catered food during the Latin American Forum 2017, that has been running in Edinburgh since 2012 and is organised annually by the University of Edinburgh Business School. The first generation young adults on which this study mainly concentrates have formed the Latin American ‘community’ in Edinburgh that is concurrently transnational and overly localised.

Migration within the UK to Edinburgh

Edinburgh is for many a second destination after they have moved to the UK. Some people who come from small towns or have lived in the countryside before moving to the UK chose Edinburgh as their destination after having lived in one of the bigger cities¹⁷. Edinburgh is a relatively small and very compact city, and so if one lives close to the city centre everything is within walking distance. I was told by some people who moved to Edinburgh after having previously lived in London that if they had stayed in London they would probably have gone back to their home countries, but they got to know Edinburgh which is a small and very peaceful city and they liked it so much because it is not as busy as London. Many people love its architecture and the fact that there are many green spaces. Some people who come from large cities, such as Mexico City, are used to noise and could not stay in the outskirts of Edinburgh or in small towns in Scotland so they moved to Edinburgh. They tend to live in the city centre of Edinburgh and near the busy roads. However, they still prefer living in Edinburgh, as commuting in London takes a long time and a lack of personal space disturbed them. Some people came to Edinburgh when they became unemployed or could not find employment in other cities in the UK. Gilberto told me that since London is an expensive city, there is a real problem if you do not work. It is so much easier to sustain oneself in Edinburgh during the period when searching for a job, as renting accommodation is cheaper. Nano worked in drilling for 17 years at North Sea Oil, after moving from Chile. He immigrated first to Belgium and then to the UK. In 1994 he was made redundant and so he started organising salsa parties in Aberdeen. In 2000, salsa started growing in popularity in Edinburgh and Nano's friends told him that there was a demand for salsa DJs in Edinburgh. He moved to Edinburgh as he knew a lot about salsa. He began to work as a DJ in one of the clubs in Edinburgh. As such, various salsa dance instructors, as well as people who previously worked in completely different jobs not related to dance or music but saw a demand for dance classes, came to Edinburgh and started offering dance classes and became DJs playing salsa, bachata, merengue, samba and other "Latin American" music.

¹⁷ listed on p. 4.

Latin American migrants' 'legal grounds for entry' to the UK

Immigrants who plan to come to the UK can be divided into two main groups: those from the European Economic Area (EEA) – that includes all countries from the European Union, Iceland, Lichtenstein and Norway – and those who are from outside the EEA. The first group can enter the UK on a valid passport or a national identity card. The latter needs a valid passport, and some may also need a visa, depending on their country of origin and the length of time one intends to stay in the UK, i.e. whether it is 6 months or less, or more than 6 months (gov.uk n.a. 2015). The migration grounds for entry defined by the UK Government (ibid.) when verifying whether one needs a UK visa are based on, apart from the country one is from, what one intends to do in the UK. Immigrants may come to the UK for tourism, including visiting friends and family, even though their 'real' reasons may be to settle in the UK. They might come to work or study. They can apply for a visa when joining their partner or family for a long stay, getting married, visiting their child at school, getting private medical treatment or coming for official diplomatic or government business (gov.uk).

When people from outside the EEA apply for a work visa, the main groups entitled to enter the UK are skilled workers who have been offered a skilled job in the UK, or those who have obtained a job in the UK in the overseas branch of a company one worked for in their country of residence. Those who want to come to work in the UK for a short period can apply for a visa for temporary workers, for example, in sports, the arts, entertainment or as a volunteer. Domestic workers in private households can also apply for a visa (gov.uk). The main Latin American migrants' 'legal grounds for entry' (Blinder 2016: 2) to the UK are those of work, study, family and asylum. Only when these categories are not treated as "migration reasons", but as diverse "legal grounds for entry" (ibid.: 2), and then "EEA/ Swiss nationality" is rationally treated as another category (ibid.: 2). And so, many Latin Americans who have come to the UK and live in Edinburgh hold EEA nationality and have used their EEA passport to come to the UK.

Those Latin Americans who hold EEA/Swiss passports have come either directly from Latin America, or from other European countries to the UK on European passports and so this has been their "legal ground for entry". Those Latin Americans who needed to

apply for visas before coming to Edinburgh came as temporary workers i.e. dance instructors and music DJs. Also, various types of artists from Latin America e.g. actors, dancers, musicians and painters come to Edinburgh because of the Fringe Festival and other festivals taking place annually in Edinburgh. The other group consists of those who have moved to Edinburgh due to being offered a skilled job in the city in a new company or in an overseas branch in Edinburgh of the same company they worked for in their 'home countries' in Latin America (or in a previous place of residence) and obtained "a skilled workers visa". During my fieldwork I met Latin Americans who came to work in Edinburgh after having obtained the aforementioned work visa as: biomedical specialists, energy sector workers (renewable energy sources such as wave, tidal and wind sectors, as well as those working in traditional energy, in areas such as oil and gas development, consultancy and exploration¹⁸), and researchers working at universities and for research organisations.

There are more and more students from Latin America applying for student visas and coming to study in Edinburgh. Among these, some students later on decide to stay in Edinburgh. Edinburgh Universities have established partnerships and business links with various Latin American Universities. The University of Edinburgh has established a partnership with, for instance, UNAM (Mexico), Universidade de São Paulo (Brazil) and Universidad de Chile, as well as with various companies. The University of Edinburgh co-operates with Brazil's national energy company, Petrobras, and BG Group to "improve methods of extracting oil from carbonate reservoirs in offshore fields" (The University of Edinburgh 2013 n.a.). What is more, the University of Edinburgh opened its 'Office of the Americas' in São Paulo, Brazil in 2013 (ibid.). According to HESA,¹⁹ most students in Edinburgh come from Mexico, Chile, Colombia and Brazil, however there are also a few students from Argentina, Bolivia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Guatemala, Honduras, Panama, Peru, Uruguay and Venezuela.

Having contacted four Edinburgh Universities, namely Heriot Watt University, Napier University, Queen Margaret University and the University of Edinburgh and enquired

¹⁸ There are more than 2,000 energy-related companies in Scotland, putting Scotland at the forefront of the world's energies market (scotland.org). Many companies have their headquarters and consultancy offices in Edinburgh, with the offshore oil and gas companies mostly located in Aberdeen.

¹⁹ Higher Education Statistics Agency.

about their Latin American students and the type of studies and courses they take on, I noticed that most students come to Edinburgh for postgraduate studies. The majority of Latin American students do either PhD or Masters courses in Science and Engineering, followed by Humanities and the Social Sciences, ending with a few students studying Medicine and Veterinary Medicine. For instance, at Heriot Watt University, the majority of Latin American students are enrolled in the Institute of Petroleum Engineering (IPE) and the School of Management and Languages (SML).

Students who have obtained governmental scholarships to study in Edinburgh and who would like to stay in the UK after they have finished their studies have to go back to their home country and work there for at least 6 months, depending on the terms and conditions of their grant, so that they don't need to re-pay the whole scholarship, and then they are free to seek a skilled job in the UK, and once they have found it some go back to Edinburgh. Very often, it is through the networks students have established while studying in Edinburgh that they acquire employment. Some Latin American students find work as researchers, lecturers and workers in laboratories at the university where they studied. Others find employment outside academia as highly qualified specialists in one of the six aforementioned developed sectors in Edinburgh.

There are also many Latin Americans in Edinburgh whose partners are from the UK or from other European countries and have come to Edinburgh on various types of family visas, such as a spouse or partner visa. The people I spoke with either met in Scotland when a person from Latin America came to study English or to study at university, or in other cases visited their friends and relatives, or in some cases arrived as tourists in Edinburgh. Others met in Latin America while their partner – from the UK or another EU country – was working, visiting his or her friends, or travelling. As mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, most asylum seekers and refugees from Latin America came to the UK when oppressed by military governments in the 1960s and 70s, and during armed conflicts in the 1980s and 1990s. While I was writing my thesis, more Venezuelan asylum seekers started coming to the UK due to the current unstable situation in Venezuela.

The aforementioned 'legal grounds for entry' to the UK are criteria that allow one to

enter the UK and be entitled to civil rights, depending – in cases where one originates from outside the EEA – on the type of visa, or – in the case of EEA citizens – on their EEA passport. There is also a substantial number of ‘irregular status’ Latin Americans²⁰ in Edinburgh who have come to the UK without valid documents, who possess fake documents or who have overstayed their permitted time in the country. The term ‘irregular’ refers to people entering or remaining in a country without “authority to do so and are potentially open to being deported as a result” (McIlwaine 2009 in McIlwaine, Cock, and Linneker 2010: 14). This term, contrary to the terms ‘undocumented’ or ‘illegal’, does not have such a strong connotation of perceiving migrants as criminals, and it prevents “confusions over whether being undocumented means not having legally correct papers or not being officially recorded by the receiving country” (ibid.: 14). As such, I would classify immigrants with “irregular status” as merely pertaining to another “immigration status” category, as opposed to having their underlying reasons for migration revealed by this title.

Reasons for Latin American migration to Edinburgh

So far I have outlined the officially recognised grounds that one can claim when applying for a visa; those are work, study, family, asylum seeker/refugee, or when holding an EEA passport when no visa is needed to enter the UK. The ‘legal grounds’ for entry and the documents one uses in order to enter the UK are not always equivalent to migration reasons that are more personal. People’s life trajectories are complex and shaped differently by various factors. In this section I am going to outline the reasons for migration to the UK mentioned by Victor and Ana, two characters of this thesis and members of the Latin American ‘community’ in Edinburgh. These were revealed to me when they shared their life stories with me.

²⁰ The EHRC²⁰ in the published report on the Inquiry into Human Trafficking in Scotland reported evidence of “ victims [who] were exploited in the sex industry, in fruit picking farms or the hospitality industry, or forced to live in brutal conditions as domestic servants” (EHRC 2011: 4). There appears to be some evidence that among those trafficked from Latin America to Scotland were some Mexicans, Venezuelans and Brazilians (Equal Opportunities Committee 2011: 9).

Victor

Victor came to the UK with his family as a political exile. They decided to leave Chile as a response to the military coup d'état in 1973 and in order to avoid any related oppression. They first fled to Argentina. Victor lived in Argentina for three years when he escaped Pinochet's regime with his family. They moved there, as the idea was that the military coup would not last long. "It was not so far away from Chile and it was always possible to return. However, things in Argentina also got worse, and we came to the UK as political exiles", Victor said. They also applied to go to Canada, New Zealand and France. However, the UK was first to send them a letter confirming that they were welcome. "At the time when we came to the UK in 1977, there was a wave of other political refugees and asylum seekers from Argentina, Chile and Paraguay who also, because of the military coup d'états that were unfolding in their countries, applied to obtain asylum seeker or refugee status in the UK. The UN treaties guaranteed them the possibility of applying for such a status", Victor commented. The difficult political situation in Chile – which lasted longer than Victor and his family expected – impacted their stay in the UK.

"The life of many emigrants begins in London. It is a first step in the UK for many", Victor said. When he came with other Chileans to London, they were allocated places to go. Some of them stayed in London, others went to other places. They could have gone to the Midlands but Victor's father met a Scotsman in London who told him to move to Scotland. He had worked with a Chilean woman who had told him that Scotland is very similar to Chile. So Victor's father did not take the offer for the house they had been allocated, and gave it to another family. "We waited to go up to Scotland, and then we arrived in 1978 in Dundee", Victor commented. There he did part of his primary school and all of secondary school. He went to secondary without knowing English. He had to learn how to write in English, as previously he had only learned it from hearing it on the street. "When I came to the UK many people did not know where Chile is, but football helped me to explain this. I arrived in the UK in 1977, and in 1978 when I went to school there was a football world cup in Argentina. Many children from my school thought I was Argentinean, and that was the time I was able to explain that Chile is next

to Argentina”, Victor said. He emphasised it was important for him to let people know where he is from.

I had a discussion with Victor about various military coups that took place in Latin America, and according to him they had an effect on migration – both to the UK and to many other countries. Coups and a life of terror have been

a strategy designed in Washington and imposed upon the Latin American people by the economic and political forces of the right. In every instance the military acted as mercenaries to the privileged groups in power. Repression was organized on a large scale; torture, concentration camps, censorship, imprisonment without trial, and summary executions became common practices. Thousands of people “disappeared,” masses of exiles and refugees left their countries running for their lives. New wounds were added to the old and recent scars that the continent had endured.

(Allende in Galeano 1997: 8)

During our conversation, Victor was very critical of the United States and their support of various military coups in order to overthrow leaders that were inconvenient for them. As he highlighted, Chileans fled in the 1970s, mainly due to the violent overthrow of President Salvador Allende’s democratically elected Chilean government by General Augusto Pinochet’s US-backed bloody military coup on September 11 1973. Allende became the Chilean President in 1970. As Garzón (2013) outlines, Allende wanted to create inclusive democracy in Chile that would resist social inequality, poverty and wealth disproportion. Those who were afraid of Allende’s socialist principles coordinated his overthrow and chose an alternative of violent dictatorship motivated by economic interests and ideologies which preferred militarism and fascism (ibid.). Allende’s government implemented radical reforms. It took Chile’s natural resources away from U.S. companies and nationalised them. “A welfare state was set up and land reform accelerated” (The Chile Solidarity Campaign 2002). Even though more people were supporting the Popular Unity government, it was destroyed on September 11 1973 (ibid.).

During Pinochet’s regime, many of Victor’s friends and members of his family were subjected to torture, violence, disappearances and deaths. According to Amnesty International (2015 n.a.), “tens of thousands of people were detained, tortured and killed between 1973 and 1990”. In 1978 Pinochet decreed an ‘amnesty law’, valid for more

than two decades, which prevented any legal investigations of the actions of the ‘special commission’ and pardoned all individuals who committed crimes between September 11 1973 and March 10 1978. A journalistic investigation by several news reporters and journalists in Chile, including Patricia Verdugo (2001[1989]: 176 and i) revealed that the soldiers, as well as the 75 victims who were visited by the ‘special commission’ known as “Caravan of Death” in October 1973 were murdered when awaiting or serving their sentences (ibid.: i). Committing that crime was without any justification and it violated the trust Chileans had in the military (Verdugo 1989: 1). In reaction to the violent overthrow of the democratically elected Chilean government by General Augusto Pinochet’s military coup in 1973, The Chile Solidarity Campaign in the UK was established (Chile Solidarity Campaign n.d.). After the coup began in Chile, an extreme monetarist economic strategy was introduced in order to increase economic growth, however, concurrently it impoverished the working class and also intensified migration²¹ (ibid.).

During Pinochet’s regime, hundreds of thousands escaped or were expelled into exile. As the Chile Solidarity Campaign states, over 2,500 Chilean exiles settled in Britain. The organisation ceased in 1990 after nearly seventeen years of dictatorship, when democracy in Chile was re-established (ibid.). Throughout the years of terror, Chilean human rights advocates insisted that the international judicial institutions carry out their duties to defend the rights of people and to fight against injustice (Garzón 2013). Finally, in 1998 Augusto Pinochet was arrested in London, accused of genocide, torture and terrorism against Chileans, and he returned to Chile where new investigations started (Garzón 2013).

²¹ The same happened in the Venezuelan middle class, as Chavez’s politics focused mainly on the lowest class.



Figure 1.2 Above: Carlos' life story – the founder of the 'Latin America Sings in Edinburgh' group and a Chilean exile.

Together with his family, Victor made a conscious decision to apply for political exile status in the various countries I mentioned before, and then to accept the UK's invitation. The Chilean military coup is just an example of military coups that also took place in various Latin American countries and which led many Latin Americans to decide to emigrate from Latin America. Coup d'états and dictatorships forced many Latin Americans to decide to abandon their home countries for many years, and in numerous cases to never return²². Forms of oppression are the historical contexts that were part of many Latin Americans' life trajectories and decisions to migrate. Latin American migrants who came to the UK due to different types of oppression took different routes to come to the UK, and their migration experiences have differentiated. Even though the historical context of various Latin Americans may seem like something they share in common, I believe that it is important to look at the local context and thus at the life stories of particular individuals in order to look for individual motives. The details found in Victor's life trajectory are important and tell us a lot about the

²² More on Latin American history can be read in Galeano, E. (1997 [1973]) *The open veins of Latin America*. New York: Monthly Review Press.

complexity of his migration and the setting in which his family decided to migrate, and also which Victor had to find himself.

Ana

Ana came to Scotland because her husband was offered a job. They are both Venezuelans, but before they came to Scotland they moved to Mexico for work. They were fine in Mexico but Ana's husband was offered a job in Edinburgh. He found the offer interesting because he wanted to learn English, and secondly both of them wanted to do Masters degrees. They both work in the oil industry and wanted to study at either Heriot Watt University or the University of Edinburgh, as both universities are well known for their Petroleum Engineering and Petroleum Geoscience Studies.

Venezuela, in terms of personal security, has been getting so poor that Venezuelans have no other alternative. Many families, in fact, let their children migrate. Many parents live in Venezuela but their children are abroad. Venezuelans are searching for a new way of living. [...] I remember when I was a child, not as many people emigrated as now. [...]. Ultimately it has been in the last 15 years that these types of repressions from the current government have been happening. [...], Anna said

Ana believes that many Venezuelans are “searching for a new way of living”, and this is what she with her husband had looked for, both in Mexico and subsequently in the UK. According to Guardia (2007: 190 in Freitez 2011: 18, own translation) “migration was a phenomenon that appeared very sporadically because Venezuelans considered their future living standards not to be at risk”, however the situation has changed. The new immigration trend from Venezuela emerged after 1999. Even though Venezuela has some of the largest oil reserves in the world, and that should bring the country high revenues, many Venezuelans have experienced problems in areas as serious as their daily survival and prospects for personal and professional development are concerned. Due to political tensions and economic and social reasons, including lack of security, many skilled workers decided to emigrate from Venezuela (Freitez 2011: 13).

The ex president of Venezuela, Hugo Chavez, came into power in 1999 and called for a National Constituent Assembly, which accepted the new Constituency the same year. This led to significant changes in the structure of public power, as well as leading to the

extension of guaranteed rights (Lacruz 2006 in Freitez 2011: 7). In 2000, the process of re-legitimation of power started. At the end of 2001, an Enabling Act was accepted and Chavez was given the power to rule by decree for one year. During this period he approved new Hydrocarbons and Land Law Acts along with another 46 acts. This led to political conflict between the national government and other sectors being in opposition. In consequence, some large demonstrations took place in December 2002, lasting 62 days. And a coup d'état took place in 2003 which temporarily overthrew constitutional government (ibid.: 16-17). As a result of strikes, the government dismissed almost 20,000 workers from the state oil company, PDVSA.

The strike in 2002 in the oil industry was a protest against the government. Ana and her husband wanted the president to resign. After the strike, not only were they dismissed from their work, but their names were also put on a blacklist. 'It is supposed to be that when you hand in these electorate lists, these data are confidential but they were not confidential because the whole government unfortunately has control of all of the power, including electoral [...] So from there they have a list.', Ana said. Ana emphasised that in Venezuela there is only one oil company, PDVSA, in operation and which is the owner of all oil fields. All other companies are service companies and do not have a field, so they depend on the contract that they have with PDVSA, which belongs to the government. It was the government that was managing these companies and told them to finish contracts with those employees who were against the government.

So you realise that Venezuelans right now immigrate more than before because the situation in Venezuela isn't good. There is food shortage and lots of insecurity on the street. And the economy is bad. I think that the main cause is insecurity. People got tired of this and the government isn't doing anything'. [...], Anna told me.

Out of the two 'blacklists', the first one from 2002 prohibited people who were on the list from working in any other state company, or with any company that had a contract with the public sector; and the second list, which was published online in 2004, was used to disallow certain citizens from finding employment or from applying for social benefits. The list was published by one of the Members of Parliament of the National Assembly. It included the personal data of signatories who had requested a referendum of recall against President Chavez (Lacruz 2006 in Freitez 2011: 16-7). In 2004, this

referendum was called, which resulted in the continuation of the current government, and in 2006 Chavez was re-elected for a second term of government (Freitez 2011: 17).

People whose names appeared on a blacklist could not look for work in any sector related to the oil industry because the government made a rule that these people could not be employed in any oil company, or outside in a private company.

2-3 days after a person from a blacklist was employed by one of these private companies, these companies were threatened with the loss of millions of dollars' worth of contracts and so they had to dismiss this person. Many people from the oil industry emigrated because there were 20,000 people who were dismissed from the oil industry in Venezuela. This resulted in many people leaving to other countries such as Colombia, Mexico and Argentina. It happened with all the companies that were against the government, Ana said.

The above situation is what Ana mentioned to me was the reason why many of her Venezuelan friends emigrated to different Latin American countries and further afield, for example to Scotland. In Scotland there are jobs in the oil industry available for specialist staff working offshore, and also across the whole of Scotland in other companies. Ana works from home as a specialist consultant in the oil industry. Both Ana and her husband are well educated and from the outset when they came to Scotland, have had good, well-paid jobs in their professions. It is a paradoxical situation, "Venezuela is the richest country as far as oil reserves are concerned, and needs highly qualified workers. However, clearly the political situation plays a more important role and many qualified workers from the oil industry emigrate", Ana commented.

Ana and her husband, who are from the middle class, emigrated to Edinburgh because of a lack of individual development opportunities (Latinos Globales, 2008; Mateo and Ledezma, 2006; Ibarra and Rodríguez, 2010 in Freitez 2011: 19). Also, Ana's husband was offered a better position of employment in Mexico. Since they could not find good employment in Venezuela, Ana told me that they thought the best decision would be to flee in order to carry out the same type of job in Scotland, where the oil industry is also one of the key industries and therefore there is a demand for specialists. Nowadays, apart from the skilled immigrants who come to Scotland to work in the oil industry, there is a variety of people from different backgrounds emigrating from Venezuela

because of a lack of personal safety. Ana told me that in Venezuela, for instance, one would not leave one's home after 6pm because it is too dangerous, not to mention coming back from work late at night or going to work very early in the morning.

On the 9th April 2014 I went to a debate on Human Rights in Venezuela, organised by the 'Venezuelan Committee in Scotland' and held at the University of Edinburgh. It showed how human rights there are in crisis due to social, economic and political problems. A significant number of Venezuelans believe that they are unrepresented by the national institutions because the same institutions are responsible for causing these problems. This has led to protests and rallies, which were strongly oppressed by the Venezuelan government, leading to violence, torture and death. There were key social and economic problems, which set a background for the crisis in Venezuela. Homicide is increasing in Venezuela²³ (Venezuelan Committee in Scotland 2014).

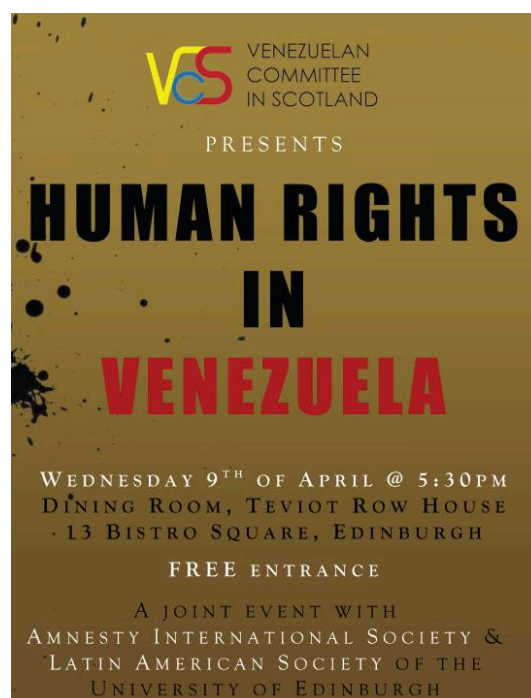


Figure 1.3 Venezuelan Committee in Scotland's poster, taken from the Venezuelans in Scotland Facebook group

²³ In 2013 the official homicide rate in Venezuela was 39 homicides per 100,000 inhabitants, however the Venezuelan Observatory for Violence (OVV), an NGO monitoring crime in the country estimated that the real figure was 79 homicides per 100,000 inhabitants for the same year. In comparison, from 1995 to 2010 the UK homicide index was between 1 and 2 homicides per 100,000 inhabitants (Venezuelan Committee in Scotland 2014).

César, a Venezuelan man in his early thirties, told me that he has not been to Venezuela for 5 years. ‘My mum lives there, so I would like to visit her but I am afraid of the violence in Venezuela. The last time I went there a policeman beat me. I was just stopped when walking down the street. Next time I go there I am going to visit the graves of my friends and relatives, as most of them have already been murdered’, he added. He believes that the whole instability, insecurity and violence have been forcing Venezuelans to emigrate. However, it is not that easy as it is not always the case that the Venezuelan government wants to issue Venezuelan passports, or the British embassy visas, if one does not have a European passport. However many people who have wanted to escape violence and insecurity in Venezuela have decided to move to Scotland using other ‘legal grounds for entry’, such as to learn the language or to study, and thus were granted a student visa.

The situation in Venezuela because of Chavez was a different form of oppression to that of Pinochet in Chile, but it was oppression nevertheless. One could argue that the historical context is similar, however I do not want to draw here on similarities between Victor and Ana as their lives differ and the ways they experienced migration are different. I presented the historical contexts when presenting the migration paths that brought Victor and Ana to Edinburgh in order to show the decisions they made and the reasons for their migration. The migration contexts which I presented were given to me by Victor and Ana. Each of them concentrated in our conversations on the aspects of the historical context that they believe had impacted their lives and brought them to where they are now.

If we were to explore more life stories of other Latin Americans, we would see that each person took a different route to come to Edinburgh. When presenting respective parts of the life stories of Victor and Ana, I aimed to demonstrate that I do not believe it is possible to categorise ‘immigrants’ and divide them into main ‘types of immigrants’, as well as to just group the reasons for migration the same way as the UK Government differentiates between various ‘legal grounds for entry’ (Blinder 2016) when granting visas. The decisions individuals make to immigrate are part of a complex process in which one takes into account different subjective factors. Even when they referred to macro-context in our conversations, one can see that it was always from their own

personal perspective, and that *they* chose which factors affected them individually. Very often there is more than one reason for migration. Perhaps the common ‘factor’ that ‘immigrants’ share is the pursuit of a better life. However, this is again something that is perceived individually. “Migration stories thus additionally emphasise individualised, self-realisation narratives of the decision to migrate” (Benson and O-Reilly 2009: 3)

Chapter 2 - The “Idea Of Latin” America

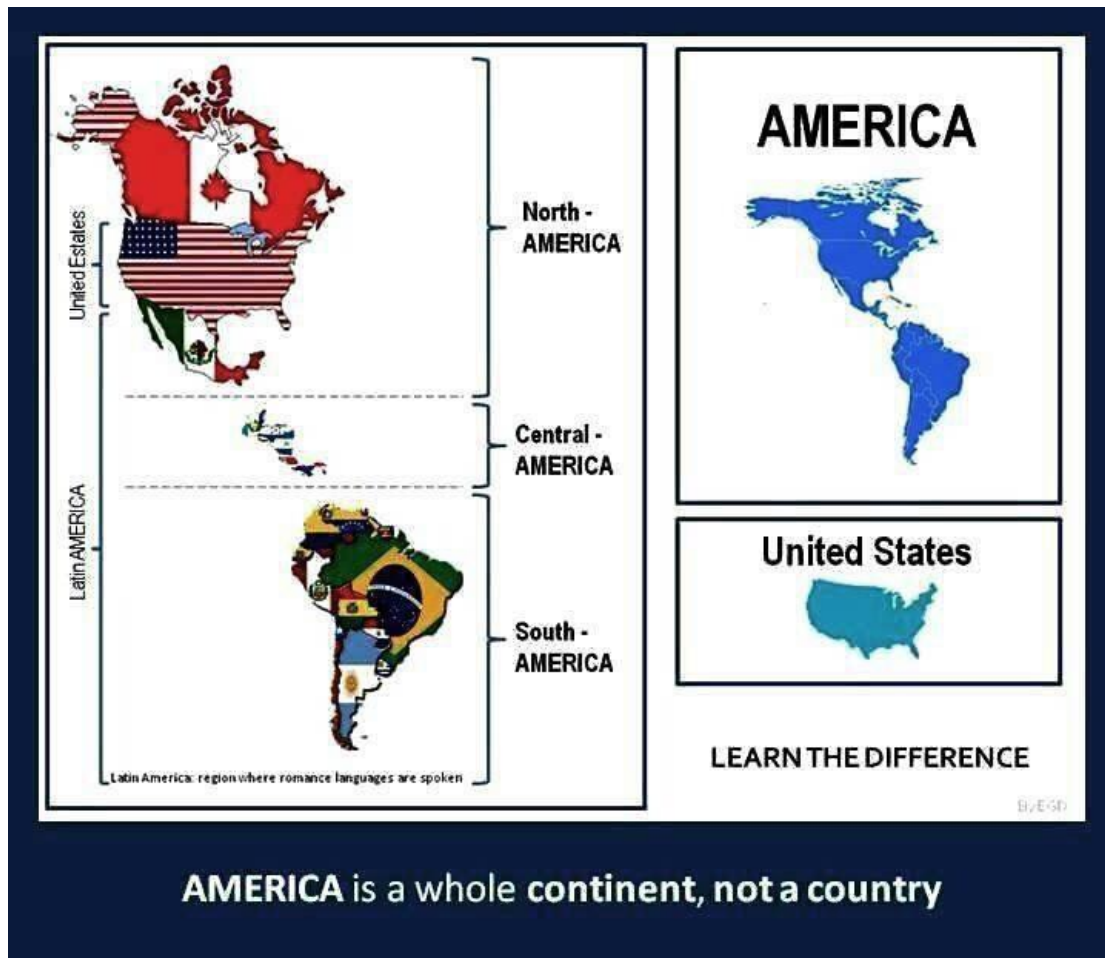


Figure 2.1 ‘AMERICA is a whole continent, not a country’ [taken from ‘Being Latino’ Facebook page]

This chapter dwells on the notion of ‘Latin American identity’ and explains how it is being constructed and what its dynamics are. It looks at the history of the idea of “Latinidad”, the term “Latino” and its role in relation to the creation of one’s identity. In this chapter I aim to discuss why I am referring to the ‘Latin American’ community in Edinburgh and not to the ‘Latino’ one. Subsequently, I analyse what it means to be ‘Latin American’ to the Latin Americans in Edinburgh and re-contextualise this analytical ‘category’, as well as looking at what individual national identities mean to them. When I use the terms ‘Latin America’ and ‘Latin American’, I am referring to a

geographical region/people who originate from North America, the Caribbean, Central America and South America where Spanish or Portuguese are spoken, as stated in the introduction. Perhaps I should use the term ‘America’, however the meaning of it has shifted significantly throughout the centuries and it would otherwise not be clear to which countries I am referring. On the concept of Latin America, Victor from Chile told me during one of our conversations:

The whole continent is America. When they say ‘I am American’, they refer to the United States. I can also say ‘I am American’ as a term, but they have monopolised it and changed it...this is what happens with all imperialism. The lie goes on. It is something very significant and serious, because what we are talking about is the United States.

As Galeano (1997[1973]: 2) also notes:

Along the way we have even lost the right to call ourselves Americans, although the Haitians and Cubans appeared in history as new people a century before the Mayflower pilgrims settled on the Plymouth coast. For the world today, America is just the United States; the region we inhabit is a sub-America, a second-class America of nebulous identity.

The words ‘America’/ ‘American’ have shifted their meaning, and nowadays many non-Latin Americans associate the terms with those who live in the United States of America. Martin Waldseemüller was the first who used the term ‘America’ on a map in 1507. After his expeditions between 1501-1502 to the New World, he recognised “that a new continent had been uncovered as a result of the voyages of Columbus and other explorers in the late fifteenth century” (The Library of Congress 2014).



Figure 2.2 ‘Waldseemüller’s map supported Vespucci’s revolutionary concept by portraying the New World as a separate continent, which until then was unknown to the Europeans” (The Library of Congress 2014).

The first photograph in this chapter appeared on the ‘Being Latino’ Facebook group and has been copied on many Facebook walls of Latin Americans in Edinburgh. It is important for those who shared the photograph on their ‘walls’ to raise awareness of the continent’s division among their non-Latin American friends. Those Latin Americans I spoke with during my fieldwork in Edinburgh would not use the word ‘Americans’ when referring to those who come from the USA [in Spanish: *Los Estados Unidos*]. On the contrary, they would refer to them as *estadounidense*, the term derived from the name of the country and which does not have a direct translation into English²⁴.

A term such as ‘Latin American’ is something very vague and elusive, and one might wonder how is it possible to group people from so many different countries into one category. There are surely many differences among people from each of the Latin American countries. I believe that in order to understand a particular situation it is necessary to re-think and re-contextualise the meaning of these categories, i.e. what ‘Latin America’ and ‘Latin American’ mean. Those are the ‘emic’ categories.

²⁴ Although non-existent, the best translation may be seen as “United Statesman”.

Emic constructs are accounts, descriptions, and analyses expressed in terms of the conceptual schemes and categories regarded as meaningful and appropriate by the native members of the culture whose belief and behaviours are being studied.

(Lett 1997: 85)

When one shifts a category's connotation and places it in a specific context that applies to a specific group of people, one also gives them a new meaning, so the 'Latin America' and 'Latin American' I am referring to become analytical categories, not sub-categories, of the region and of individuals who have come to live in Edinburgh and who define themselves as 'Latin American'. The 'idea of Latin' America

belongs to a sphere of the colonial matrix of power that touches the question of knowledge and subjectivity - knowledge in the sense that a new world map was being drawn, and subjectivity because a new identity was emerging.

(Mignolo 2009: 69)

In Latin America "*Pan-latinidad*" is a notion associated with the independence movements of the 19th century, mainly with de-colonization, developed by Simón Bolívar at the Congreso Anfictiónico de Panamá in 1826. It was initially considered an ideology for "uniting all the colonies in the New World against European imperial rule" (Rohrleitner 2013). French intellectual, Michel Chevalier contributed to the idea of "Latinidad" as the one being imprinted on the Spanish Americas. For Chevalier "our Europe" had a double origin, as do Latin (Roman) Europe and Teutonic (German) (Mignolo 2005: 77). When transferring it onto the Americas: "The two branches, Latin and German, reproduced themselves in the New World. South America is, like Meridian Europe, Catholic and Latin. North America belongs to a population that is Protestant and Anglo-Saxon" (in Mignolo 2005: 77- 78). Chevalier, after having been sent on a French state-sponsored trade mission to the United States and Mexico in 1832, came up with an idea that the Spanish-speaking and Portuguese-speaking Americas had a Christian tradition as well as a cultural and racial affinity with "Latin Europe" i.e. its inhabitants belonged to a "Latin race" and spoke Romance languages (ibid.: 73; 79-80). The idea of "Latin America" was used later on by Creole²⁵ elites responsible for nation-states building to redefine their identity and to disengage themselves from the Spanish and the Portuguese, who in the past colonised their countries. They wanted to

²⁵ In Latin America the term "Creoles" has been used to denote mainly descendants of Spanish settlers but it also has referred to other European settlers, such as Portuguese and French (Oxford Dictionaries n.d.; Bush Caver and Williams n.d.).

detach themselves from their Spanish and Portuguese past, embrace the ideology of France, and forget the legacies of their own critical consciousness. As a consequence, “Latin” American Creoles turned their backs on Indians and Blacks and their faces to France and England.

(Mignolo 2005: 67)

Creoles needed Indians and Blacks to support the struggle for independence and thus included them into the national identities they were constructing that surpassed the socio-racial divisions. The latter could subsequently demand equal rights, based on the shared national identity. At the same time, Creoles and Latin Americans were not able – or were not willing – to end their dependency on Europe, “they needed Europe as Indians needed their past and Blacks needed Africa and the memories of suffering under slavery” (ibid.: 68).

‘Latino’

The term “Latino” is a diminutive of ‘latinoamericano’, meaning ‘Latin American’ in Spanish. It denotes those who “come from the territory in the Americas colonized by Latin nations, such as Portugal, Spain, and France, whose languages are derived from Latin” (Oquendo 1995: 97). As such, Brazilians, Mexicans and Haitians are ‘latinoamericanos’, however those who are descendants of the former British colonies, for example from Belize, British Guyana or Falkland Islands or from Dutch colonies in such as Suriname or Tobago are not (ibid.: 97). Another category is “Hispanic”, which possibly derives from “hispanoamericanos” and it denominates those who come from “the former colonies of Spain in the “New World”” (ibid.: 97). As can be seen from the aforementioned definitions, the “Latino” category, in its strict version, is more inclusive than the term “Hispanic”, as it includes those who come not only from the possessions of Spain, but also Portugal and France (ibid.: 97). The above-mentioned terms change their meanings in their informal use. The term “Latino” is sometimes treated as an equivalent to “hispanoamericano” or “iberoamericano” (ibid.: 97)²⁶. The term “Latino”

²⁶ “Iberoamericano” describes those who come from “American territories occupied by Portugal and Spain, the two countries on the Iberian Peninsula” (Oquendo 1995: 97). This category excludes descendants of any country “once claimed by France, Britain, or the Netherlands” (ibid.: 97).

has mainly been used in the USA to describe immigrants and residents in the USA who are of Latin American origin. It has been considered that

the very term Latino has meaning only in reference to the U.S. experience. Outside the United States, we don't speak of Latinos; we speak of Mexicans, Cubans, Puerto Ricans, and so forth. Latinos are made in the USA.

(Suárez-Orozco and Pérez 2009: 4)

The U.S. state in the 1960s and 1970s came up with the “Hispanic” label as a way of eliminating specific histories of Chicanos and Puerto Ricans who often considered themselves “*as distinct groups*” and who wanted to gain more civil rights (de Genova and Ramos-Zayas 2003: 4). In 1969 U.S., President Richard Nixon proclaimed a “National Hispanic Heritage Week” in order to converge the diverse “historical experiences” of Mexicans and Puerto Ricans and to homogenise those who wanted to be treated as separate groups (ibid.: 4). In the US, firstly in population censuses, it was the “Hispanic origin” that was used in 1970 (Gibson and Jung 2002). The term was subsequently changed in 1997 by the US government from “Hispanic” into “Hispanic or Latino” and it defines “persons who trace their origin or descent to Mexico, Puerto Rico, Cuba, Central and South America, and other Spanish cultures” (whitehouse.gov n.a. 1997).

People who identify with the terms “Hispanic” or “Latino” are those who classify themselves in one of the specific Hispanic or Latino categories listed on the decennial census questionnaire and various Census Bureau survey questionnaires – “Mexican, Mexican Am., Chicano” or “Puerto Rican” or “Cuban” – as well as those who indicate that they are “another Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish origin”. Origin can be viewed as the heritage, nationality group, lineage, or country of birth of the person or the person’s ancestors before their arrival in the United States. People who identify their origin as Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish may be of any race.

(United States Census Bureau n.a. n.d.)

As can be seen the US government uses the term “Latino” referring only to those who come from former colonies of Spain. Only some US government organisations, such as the Vermont Agency of Transportation, include in their definition of the term “Latino” those who come from the former Portuguese colonies apart from the descendants of the former colonies of Spain (Oquendo 1995: 97). At large, in the USA the use of the term “Latino” is no more inclusive and descriptive than “Hispanic” (ibid.: 97). The US state has been deliberately creating “Hispanics” in order to treat them as a “homogenized

“minority” population analogous to African Americans (De Genova and Ramos-Zayas 2003: 3). Thus, the “Hispanic” status of Latinos is widely treated as a racial condition all the same” (ibid.: 3). Out of convenience, politicians and mass media, among others, have ascribed the ‘umbrella’ term “Latino” to the various Spanish-speaking people who live in the USA. However, one needs to bear in mind that neither “Latino” nor “Hispanic” nationality exist, as Latin America consists of so many diverse countries (Oquendo 1995).

The use of various categories, apart from being used for ascription, is also a matter of self-identification. For instance, some of those who support the use of the “Latino” category instead of “Hispanic” want to detach themselves from the links “of the brutal Spanish colonization of America” (Oquendo 1995: 98) that the term “Hispanic” holds (ibid.: 98) or reject the ‘Hispanic’ label forced by the U.S state (de Genova and Ramos-Zayas 2003: 6). The term ‘Latino’ excludes Spanish or Portuguese people from it. It is important that the members of the community give themselves a name (Oquendo 1995: 98). As such, implementation of the term “Latino” in the USA or, “Latin American” in the UK, could be considered as “part of a broader process of self-definition and self-assertion” (Oquendo 1995: 98). The choice of the term one wants to identify with “invites re-thinking and re-defining of what membership in this community is all about” (Oquendo 1995: 97-98).

The formal definition of the term “Latino” is linked with the likewise “objectionable Portuguese and French colonial projects, and both terms exclude the rich African and Native American influence on the Latino/a community” (ibid.: 97).

The fluid Latin-American concept of race differs from the rigid United States idea of biologically determined and highly distinct human divisions. In most Latin cultures, skin color is an individual variable - not a group marker - so that within the same family one sibling might be considered white and another black.

(Wright 1994)

As Peter Wade (2010: 12) also emphasised, many natural scientists and most social scientists are of the opinion that “races are *social constructions*. The idea of race is just that - an idea”. It has “consequences such as racial discrimination and racial violence” (Wade 2008: 177). Victor from Chile recalled a situation from when he first arrived in London and was walking down the road with a ‘black’ friend from Uruguay. The

Uruguayan did not know much English at that time and was stopped by a group of 'black' English people who asked him, "why are you walking with these 'white' people? You should be with your own people". He tried to answer as best as he could, "But these are my people...".

The notion that races exist with definable physical characteristics and, even more so, that some races are superior to others is the result of particular historical processes which, many would argue, have their roots in the colonisation by European peoples of other areas of the world.

(Wade 2010: 12)

In Latin America, racial categories are more fluid than, for instance, in the USA. They can be negotiated and changed (Pozzi 2007: 55). They are still affected by skin colour and physical appearance, however what is important to mention is that they are also mediated by other social factors such as education, social class and employment, as well as by socio-economic status (ibid.: 55). "In the United States, a man's colour determines what class he belongs to. In Puerto Rico, a man's class determines what his colour is" (Fitzpatrick 1987: 106). In Latin America, once one or some of the social factors are changed, consequently the perceived race or the cultural definition of their skin colour, and of their children, changes as well (Pozzi 2007: 55). Victor explained to me that in Latin America there are many mixed societies of people coming from various social classes and of different skin colours.

In Latin America, to over-simplify a complex situation, there is a continuum of racial categories and often only people who look quite African in appearance will be identified as black; people of evidently more mixed ancestry will often be classed by a variety of terms denoting a position between black and white.

(Wade 2010: 13)

The meaning of being, for instance, 'black', 'white', 'indian', '*mestizo*', etc. differs depending on the context (ibid.: 13). These are variable categories that are "a shorthand term of reference" (ibid.: 163). Laura, from Chile, told me that in her country there are many Peruvians who work as domestic workers in Chileans' houses. Laura told me that the racism and classism is so evident that very often people do not know or do not want to know the name of their cleaner, not to mention about speaking with that person. This is related to the differences in those people's socio-economic status and social class. Laura also commented that because in Chile there are so many Peruvian immigrants, for instance having one's own flat cleaned or using a babysitter is something that is cheap

and very often carried out by immigrants. Once she moved to Edinburgh, she realised that it is very expensive and ‘a luxury’ here. She told me that now she is an immigrant herself, so her perspective has changed, and she has met many nice Peruvians in Edinburgh. She admitted that she used to be racist and classist. Now though, whenever she speaks on Skype with her family – who lives in Chile – and they make a racist joke about Peruvians, she does not let them do it and tells them to watch what they are saying because she is now an immigrant as well.

As it was brought to my attention by various Latin Americans in Edinburgh, the racial and class differences among Latin Americans diminish here in Edinburgh as they are all living abroad and they are all immigrants; and so their perspective on class and race differences changes. This is where being Latin American returns as a unifying concept. Latin Americans in Edinburgh are exposed to people from different countries. “Indians, Afro descendants in South America and the Caribbean, and Latinos/as in the US” (Mignolo 2005: 68), as well as – I believe – the Latin Americans in the UK, “are doing what Creoles of European descent should have done two hundred years ago” (ibid.: 68). They have been constructing their own terms and identities (ibid.: 68) without looking at the ideologies of other countries. The Latin American immigrants in Edinburgh are brought together by ‘similar’ experiences of a life as an immigrant who comes from Latin America. They acknowledge the presence of various ethnic groups and ethnic differences within a particular Latin American country. Ethnicity is therefore understood as “a social construction that is centrally about identifications of difference and sameness” (Wade 2010: 15). Ethnicity is “a way of categorising complex cultural difference and thus defining individuals who was who and how to behave towards them” (Wade 2010: 16). Latin Americans in Edinburgh are also aware of the national differences between Latin American countries. They are also conscious of the existence of many different races in Latin America, however it is not an important factor in the creation of the ‘Latin American-ness’ in Edinburgh.

Oquendo (1995: 103) claims that, for policy reasons, in the racial categorisation in censuses and other questionnaires in the USA there should be a ‘Hispanic’ category artificially created and added as a race. He stated that it only makes sense if it does not refer to physiognomy but to “the cultural and spiritual life of peoples” (ibid.: 107). The

reconceptualisation of the term allows those who have felt excluded to be able to evoke their identities and to fight for social justice (ibid.: 107). Furthermore, Oquendo acknowledges that the Latin American identity of the racially oppressed surpasses their physical appearance, and that a more profound tie amongst them “has been preserved or perhaps created throughout their history of being racially subjugated and categorized” (ibid.: 110). As W.E.B. Du Bois referred to surpassing “the material concept of race”, there should be a shift in “the focus from the ‘grosser physical differences of color, hair and bone’²⁷ to the sociological and historical differences between human beings” (Oquendo 1995: 110). The ‘Latin American identity’ of the members of the Latin American ‘community’ in Edinburgh that I am looking at surpasses both the notion of ‘race’ and is based more on the harmony of the collective and individual similarities and differences. There are therefore two categorisations of Latin Americans: the official racial categorisation, the ‘etic’ one; and the ‘emic’ definition that is built on shared experiences, ‘communitas’²⁸ and necessity. ‘Homogenous’ racial and statistical categorisations cannot encompass the differences in people’s experiences.

To sum up, the term ‘Latino’ has diffused outside the USA and I have heard Latin Americans, for instance, who have migrated to the UK and have used this ‘category’ to describe themselves or to identify with it. Many members of the Latin American ‘community’ in Edinburgh have some relatives or members of their family who stay or used to live in the USA and who are referred to as ‘Latinos’. What is more, the U.S. media, books and movies, that are also popular in Latin America frequently refer to the term ‘Latino’. Some members of the Latin American ‘community’ in Edinburgh, once they have immigrated, start applying interchangeably the notions of ‘Latino’ and ‘Latin American’ to describe themselves. Still many Latin Americans who do not live in the USA would use the term ‘Latin American’ not ‘Latino’, perhaps to detach themselves from the imagination of the stereotypical ‘Latino’ that exists in the USA.

²⁷ W.E.B. Du Bois (1983) *The Conservation of Races*, in W.E.B. Du Bois SPEAKS: SPEECHES AND ADDRESSES 1890-1919 73, 75 (1983) in A. Oquendo (1995) “Re-imagining the Latino/a Race”, in R. Delgado and J. Stefancic (eds.) *The Latino/a Condition: A Critical Reader*. New York: New York University Press, 60-74.

²⁸ Turner (1969). More in the following section: „Identity as a personal journey”.

(In)Visibility Of The Latin Americans In The UK- Political And Sensorial Identity

The number of Latin Americans in the UK is growing but in spite of this not much is known about them. To a certain extent, this is due to the fact that it is a considerably smaller population when compared to the African, South Asian, West Indian and Eastern European ‘communities’. Latin Americans by and large have not been formally categorised as an ethnic minority group, and therefore they do not appear in most government statistics (McIlwaine 2007: 3). “The social control of perceptibility- who is seen, who is heard, whose pain is recognized-plays an essential role in establishing positions of power within society” (Howes and Classen 2014: 65-6). Sveinsson (2007), who carried out research on Bolivians in London looked at the “Challenges and Achievements of a London Community” emphasising that Latin Americans do have a noticeable impact as far as the cultural life of Londoners is concerned. The annual Carnival del Pueblo in Burgess Park attracts thousands of Londoners and is said to be “Europe’s largest celebration of Latin American culture” (Mayor of London in Sveinsson 2007: 1). The Latin Americans are visible participants and contributors to the everyday life of London. Despite this, Latin Americans have been almost overlooked. The interests of Latin Americans are often unnoticed by the authorities as a result of them being categorised as “Other”. Latin Americans continue to be both unseen and unrecognised in political, economic and social discourse (Sveinsson 2007). The exceptions are the London boroughs of Southwark and Lambeth, which have recognised ‘Latin American’ as an ethnic minority group i.e. the first one in 2012 (Southwark Council n.a. 2012) and the latter in April 2014 (Verma 2014). This is a possible move towards ‘Latin Americans’ being recognised at a national level (Chipana 2014). Recently the Hackney Council and the Islington Council in London have also recognised Latin Americans as an ethnic group (clauk.org.uk).

The Latin American category in the UK can be seen as a political and sensorial construct related to the issues of power and resistance. ‘Not seeing’ Latin Americans in the UK, and Latin Americans wanting to be ‘seen’ and included, is related to sensing the world, where “senses are directly put to political ends” (Howes and Classen 2014:

66). “Sensory ways, models and metaphors inform our notions of social integration, hierarchy and identity” (ibid.: 66). By accepting the ‘Latin American’ category the Latin Americans in the UK can assert certain rights i.e. equal access to employment, education and social services (Chipana 2014). That is the reason why, for example, the *Coalition of Latin Americans in the UK* are organising campaigns in order to include ‘Latin American’ as an ethnic minority and hence include it in the subsequent census:

Latin Americans’ great contribution and hard work in the UK can NO longer be overlooked! We are an essential part of the social, economical, cultural and political environment of Britain in 2013! We are part of the British multicultural mix and richness that cannot be ignored! The recognition of the Latin American community as an ethnic minority will be a stepping stone in the process of equality, that will enable our community to reach its full potential.

(Perez Shepherd 2013)²⁹

The “desire” for community, for ‘we’ is also “an act of self-protection [...] as a defense against confusion and dislocation” (Sennet 2000: 138). Those immigrants and other outsiders who are rejected by the host population desire to be part of a community. This is due to the fact that politics nowadays “aim more at the weak, those who travel the circuits of the global labour market, rather than at the strong, those institutions which set poor workers in motion or make use of their relative deprivation” (ibid.: 138). People look to the ‘community’ for “attachment and depth” (ibid.: 138).

Various Latin American organisations in London claim to represent ‘the Latin Americans in the UK’ and there are those Latin Americans in the UK who support these organisations’ fight for the ‘Latin American’ to be treated in censuses as an ethnic minority group. However, I want to emphasise here that these are the ‘voices’ of some Latin Americans in the UK and not of all of them. This ‘group’ of Latin Americans would like to be seen as an ‘ethnic minority group’ even though many are aware of the internal differences among the Latin Americans. However, by treating ‘Latin Americans’ as an ‘ethnic minority group’ they can, drawing on Abner Cohen (1969, 1974), create the boundaries and cultural difference between ‘Latin Americans’ and others in order to gain some rights. As I have mentioned before when I discussed how the category ‘Latino’ came about, the ‘Latino’ nationality or ‘Hispanic’ one do not exist. Latin Americans come from many different countries and within each of them

²⁹ More on CLAUk- recognition www.clauk.org.uk/recognition/ [accessed on 10.3.2015].

there are many ethnic groups. Nonetheless, the ‘group’ of Latin Americans that fights for the ‘Latin American’ to be included as an ‘ethnic minority group, use what Spivak (1987) calls ‘strategic essentialism’ which is “a *strategic* use of positivist essentialism in a scrupulously visible political interest” (Spivak 1987: 205 emphasis in the original). They use it to construct their shared political identity, thus to present Latin Americans as a homogenous group in order to assert equal rights to - for instance - employment, education and social services. On the other hand sensory markers are used in order to diminish national and regional differences among Latin Americans and create a new collectivity of Latin Americans in the UK. In many Latin American countries “broadly-shared sensory symbols already existed” (Howes and Classen 2014: 72) and were part of the building of the national identity³⁰. Many Latin Americans in the UK look for similar food, music, dance genres and ways of being; and give it a Pan-Latin American importance³¹. The Latin American identity is an ‘anchor’ through which various individuals express their sense of belonging. The following section looks at the notion of ‘identity’ and describes the aforesaid sense of belonging among the members of the Latin American ‘community’ in Edinburgh.

What One Is Not

Victoria, originally from Venezuela, told me that she feels 100% Venezuelan and that she had never used the term “Latino/Latina” when she lived in Venezuela as “In Venezuela we are all Venezuelans and you don’t have to say I am from Latin America. You know”. When the local people ask her in Edinburgh where is she from she never says “Latina” first, she always responds that she is Venezuelan. It is when people ask her whether it is in Latin America, or in South America, that she answers yes - so in a way people impose these categories “Latin American” and “South American” upon her, they ascribe it to her. Interestingly she has told me that in the situation in which she spends time in Edinburgh with a group of Latin Americans she feels like one of them: “I feel as a part of a group because I feel that we are all ‘Latinos’ I feel ‘Latina’ amongst

³⁰ such as tango in Argentina or *tamales* in Mexico

³¹ more about it in Chapter 4 on the Latin American dynamics.

others but yes I see the cultural differences. And most of all, between countries,” Victoria said.

When Victoria moved abroad she first noticed the similarities Latin Americans have in comparison with the non-Latin Americans, that differ a lot. Victoria and her Latin American friends, according to her, share: the same language – Spanish; a similar way of being; laughing at similar type of jokes; being expressive, and using gesticulation and touch when speaking with other Latin American friends; being open; listening to similar music; and eating some of the dishes that are similar. Her ‘identity’ is in the process of a continuous construction and de-construction when in contact with various people. Due to her contact with various Scots she has become aware of her ‘Latin American-ness.’ Her identity is being constructed, as Hall (1996: 4) calls, “through the relation to the Other” thus understanding what being “non-Latin American” is about. She sees the differences in other “Latin Americans” when spending time with her Latin American social circle, but concentrates on the things they have in common. She also constructs her identity by contrasting herself with Scots with whom she does not share much.

Victoria has, drawing from Wade (2010: 17), multiple identities depending on whom she is communicating with and in what context. “Every social relationship, perhaps every moment of social interaction, is tinged with the playing of a role; one passes oneself off as in some way, major or minor, someone one is not” (Rapport 2010: 91). When Victoria is in Venezuela she identifies herself as a person from the coast of Venezuela as opposed to Venezuelans living in other parts of the country, or as Venezuelan when dealing with people from other countries who also live in Venezuela. While living in Edinburgh she identifies herself as ‘Latina’ to distinguish herself from the non-Latin Americans who also live in Edinburgh. Her identities are “‘nested’ in a kind of Russian doll form” (Wade 2010: 17). Victoria moves between categories. Drawing on Silvia Posocco (2004: 152) Victoria goes through a process of ‘passing’. She distinguishes between her own categories and the categories that other people ascribe onto her. Her own understanding of what it means when she identifies herself as ‘Latina’ differs to when non-Latin Americans she meets categorise her as ‘Latina’.

I was introduced one day to Danny from Brazil through Tatiana, an Ecuadorian girl with

whom I spoke about my project first. We met with Danny at a café in the city centre where he works and we talked about his life in Edinburgh. I talked with Danny about his friends in Edinburgh and at that point he differentiated himself from people in Edinburgh and spoke about himself as “Latin” and “South American”:

I feel very Latin. South American I would say. I feel very different from the culture here. It is like guys here at my work they say to me: “you are very touchy³² person”. So I talk. I need to feel it. Some people do not like this about me. Sometimes it is very difficult because they find touching other people all the time rude, and talking all the time, so for me it is a big shock, Danny said.

Similarly to Victoria from the previous section, Danny mentioned the differences within Latin American countries but immediately afterwards spoke about similarities that he believes they share and how important the contact with his “Latin American” friends is for him.

I feel very different with Colombians to be honest. I think Brazil is a country in South America. Latin Americans are very different I would say. All countries around. I don't know why. The similar countries are maybe Argentina and Paraguay. We are very different from Colombians and Ecuadorians. And all these countries for me they are very different countries. [...] The way she cooks for me is weird. [Danny's flatmate is Colombian]. The way she sees the world. The way she talks. The way they do things [Colombians]. When I was a child I thought maybe everything was the same. It is South America, all the countries around me. But I like being with them because they are very 'touchy' people, they laugh, they are happy all the time, so for me this is important.

Danny represents himself as a person who is neither Brazilian nor British. Yet interestingly he describes himself as ‘South American’ and ‘Latin’. He sees many differences within Latin America and thinks that Brazil is a different country from, for example, Brazil's neighbouring countries. He gave the example of his Colombian flatmate who cooks differently and has a different way of seeing the world but at the same time Danny has many Latin American friends: Colombian, Ecuadorian, Chilean and Mexican. He feels good in their presence because they are like him: friendly and warm, they use touch for expressing themselves and happiness is an important factor that they share³³. Perhaps the ‘Latin American’ identity offers him a place to be that

³² This conversation was in English and Danny used a word ‘touchy’ wanting to convey a different meaning than the word touchy in English means. He created the word ‘touchy’ to describe a person who uses a lot of touch in his day-to-day communication.

³³ More on touch and happiness in Chapter 3 in the section about the ‘Collective system of representation; Manuel's personal boundaries’.

Brazilian and British cannot. Moreover, the members of the Latin American 'community' in Edinburgh do not ignore their 'cultural' diversity; they acknowledge the language differences³⁴ and the differences in celebrations and customs. Unlike Danny, Abilio believes that he and his Latin American friends see the world the same way.

I feel Peruvian [...] We "Latinos" have lots of things in common. The only difference is - for example - a type of accent, but ideology, culture, idiosyncrasy and way of thinking we share. The same customs. [...] for example when I play in a football team there are students from Chile, Venezuelans, I am the only Peruvian, players from Ecuador, there are Mexicans, and always when we make a joke we all consider it...we all laugh because we understand it, the 'Latino' humour. The only difference is the accent but the way of thinking, opinions – they are all the same, Abilio said.

The "situated local specific perspective"³⁵ of the Latin American community in Edinburgh enables "cultural diversity to be respected". It allows differences such as class, age, race, sexual orientation and religion to be acknowledged among the members of the Latin American 'community' and within particular countries in Latin America "without losing sight of the commonalities" (Braidotti 1992: 9). By looking at the Latin American identity, one ought to recall that identity is not identical but the same in respect to a shared difference from others (Sökefeld 2001: 536). The individuals themselves have to handle the multitude of differences that surround them, "the plurality of identities they assume or are ascribed in particular moments" (ibid.: 536). However, most Latin Americans concentrate on what they have in common with their own meanings attached to it. Latin Americans in Edinburgh belong to different communities and move from one to another. Like Gerd Baumann observed in his study (1996, 2006: 5) that adult Southallians³⁶ perceived themselves as belonging to various "communities at once, each with its own *culture*. Making one's life meant ranging across them" (ibid.: 5). And in the same way that young Southallians informed Baumann about their 'shifting identities' (Ibid.: 5), Latin American identity and belonging to the Latin American 'community', are complex and very often

³⁴ There is a difference between words that are used in different contexts. Words can mean completely different things but at the end of the day they understand each other. Here I would also like to acknowledge that Brazilians are also part of the Latin American 'community' even though they speak Portuguese not Spanish. More on this in Chapter 3 on the Latin American 'community'.

³⁵ Braidotti (1992).

³⁶ those living in London's district- Southall.

contradictory among various individuals - as well as for a particular person at different moments of his or her life.

‘None[t]here-ness’ As An Identity

At the same time Danny told me that as he has been living outside Brazil for many years, there are moments in his life that he feels like he is from “nowhere”.

I have been living abroad for so long that outside my country I do not feel Brazilian any more. [...]. When I went to Portugal I was a child. When I go there people treat me in a different way because I feel lost as well. When I go there I feel lost. So I don’t feel like I am from here because I am a foreigner and not from there as well. [...] Everything changed, my head changed. My mentality changed but at the same time I do not have the mentality of a British person. At the same time I do not have the mentality of a Brazilian. Sometimes I feel that I am from nowhere. [...], Danny said.

Various members of the Latin American ‘community’ have raised the feeling of being from “nowhere” on many occasions. Manuel, from Ecuador told me

I think what joins us ‘Latinos’ is the sentiment of leaving ‘the tierra’ [land, homeland], so we all feel sad. We try to be happy and that is why we look for other ‘Latinos’ because we know that we feel the same. I think what joins us together is *arraigo* [roots/being rooted]. We feel rooted to where we come from. This is what makes us happy I think.[...] There is nothing worse for a Latino to feel ‘ ‘rootless’³⁷. [...]

Fear, anxiety and nostalgia are the emotions that are common when one detaches oneself from “familiar forms of identity” (Braidotti 2006: 89). Latin American identity of the Latin American migrants, exiles and refugees in Edinburgh is carried out by means of “disidentification from established, nation-bound points of reference” (ibid.: 89). Latin Americans in Edinburgh feel at times “rootless” and personally experience either pain or loss “felt as a result of being uprooted and forced into dis-identifying with familiar identities” (ibid.: 89).

Diasporic subjects of all kinds express the same sense of wounding. Multi-locality is the affirmative translation of this negative sense of loss. Following Glissant, the becoming-nomadic points to a process of positive transformation of pain of loss, turning it into the active production of multiple forms of belonging and complex allegiances. What is lost in the sense of fixed origins is gained in an increased desire to belong, in a multiple rhizomic manner that overcomes the bilaterialism of binary identity formations.

(Braidotti 2006: 89-90)

Thus, the Latin American identity is a nomadic identity. “Nomads” do not escape the pain rather they go beyond its “stultifying effect of passivity that [it] can produce” (Braidotti 2006: 90) along with the “mourning landscapes of nostalgia” (ibid.: 90) and actively affirm the new ways of belonging. However they remain aware of “the pain of loss” when reshaping their “way of being in the world” (ibid.: 90). In such a way “the internal disarray, fracture and pain provide the ethical conditions for transformation” (ibid.: 90).

Chapter 3 – Latin American Identity

In this chapter I explore the sense of identity among the Latin Americans in Edinburgh through Braidotti's notion of "nomadic identity" (2003, 2011, 2013) as well as through Hall's notion of identity as "constantly in the process of change and transformation" (1996: 4). By "identity" I mean how both individuals and groups constitute their own understanding of who they are through their life course, social experience and in relation to how other individuals and other groups perceive them.

[I]dentities are never unified and, in late modern times, increasingly fragmented and fractured; never singular but multiply constructed across different, often intersecting and antagonistic, discourses, practices and positions. They are subject to a radical historicization, and are constantly in the process of change and transformation.

(Hall 1996: 4, own square brackets)

'Identity' thus is a continuously constructed and de-constructed 'product' that emerges and can only be understood in a particular context within a specific discourse in a process of recurrent differentiation. "Identities are constructed through, not outside, difference. [...] only through the relation to the Other" (ibid.: 4). Derrida (1973: 141) calls it the 'dynamic difference': "Différance is the non-full, non-simple, structured and differentiating origin of differences". Hence, 'identity' is built on the relation to what one is not, "to precisely what [one] lacks, to what has been called its *constitutive outside*" (Hall 1996: 4-5). Consequently, you are "Latin American" because you are aware of what being Latin American is not. Community is a 'symbolic construction' and its boundaries "are *relational* rather than absolute; that is, they mark the community *in relation to* other communities" (Cohen 1985: 58).

Rapport and Dawson (1998: 4) highlighted that 'contemporary identity' has a form of a physical or cognitive search, perceived as a fluidity and movement across time and space. One can physically move across the borders but also through an imaginary movement one can travel to one's past or future, to different places one lived in and different past moments one experienced. Likewise, Braidotti (2011: 34 own square brackets) came up with the notion of the "nomad's identity" when opposing

the condition of migrant [that] cast[s] upon [her] [...] [and] chose to become a nomad, that is to say, a subject in transit and yet sufficiently anchored to a historic position to accept responsibility and therefore make [her]self accountable for it.

Therefore, “the nomad stands for movable diversity; the nomad’s identity is an inventory of traces” (Braidotti 2011: 41). Braidotti, after Cohen, underlines that the world in which we are living now is the world of globalisation, which is “about the mobilisation of differences and the de-territorialisation of social identity” which “challenges the hegemony of nation-states and their claim to exclusive citizenship” (Cohen 1997 in Braidotti 2011: 5), and surpasses their “hold over territory, cultural identity, and social control” (Braidotti 2011: 5). As she explains:

Being a nomad, living in transition, does not mean that one cannot or is unwilling to create those necessarily stable and reassuring bases for identity that allow one to function in a community. Rather, nomadic consciousness consists in not taking any kind of identity as permanent. The nomad is only passing through; s/he makes those necessarily situated connections that can help her/him to survive, but s/he never takes on fully the limits of one national, fixed identity. The nomad has no passport – or has too many of them.

(Braidotti 2011: 64)

In this context, I argue that the members of the Latin American ‘community’ in Edinburgh perceive themselves through different identities at different moments of their lives. Some Latin Americans I spoke to used the term ‘identity’ themselves; others talked about who they think they are. These identities are shaped through personal experiences. Many members of the Latin American ‘community’ in Edinburgh claim the Latin American identities that they discovered after having immigrated to Edinburgh, as well as national identities that they have been anchored to before migrating. What various Latin Americans mean by the identities they claim is something that alternates. It is part of Latin American people’s self-awareness and self-consciousness, seeing themselves and others at the same time through similarities. I.e. the collective system of representation, ‘Latin American dynamics’ and differences which arose through their own imagination of ‘stereotypes’. Latin American identity is a ‘nomadic identity’ changing through one’s course of life. One finds oneself through life moments and through the necessities of daily life, as I will explore in the below section on ‘identity as a personal journey’.

Marisol – Identity as a personal journey

After having seen on the Facebook group, ‘Venezuelans in Scotland’, a post of some people selling *arepas*³⁸ and *tamales*³⁹ at one of the food markets in Edinburgh, I went there one Saturday with my family and friends to try the food.



Figure 3.1 Photograph of us taken by Aileen at the Venezuelan food stall in the Grassmarket. Bottom left: *arepas*. Bottom right *tamales*

³⁸ *Arepas* are maize flat breads served with various fillings such as cheese, avocado, meat or black beans. They are popular in Colombia, Venezuela and Panama.

³⁹ *Tamales* are cooked maize (corn) dough with different fillings, wrapped with either corn or plantain leaves (depending on the region) and are either boiled or steamed. They are very popular in Mexico, Peru, Ecuador, and in other countries. In most countries they are known by the same name, but other countries also use different names to identify them.

I met Marisol, who is the co-owner of the food stall and was preparing the delicious food. I spoke about my project and I exchanged telephone numbers with her partner who was helping her at the stand, as she was busy serving food. She offered to take part in my research.

Marisol and I meet one afternoon in a café on Lothian Road. We sat on high stools next to each other – both facing the window, but we quickly decided that we did not like sitting in this way and so we moved to another room. We sat by a table in front of each other as it was easier to talk this way. The café was quiet, but Marisol didn't seem to mind it. She began talking loudly about her life. "I always wanted to live abroad", she said.

I am a dreamer. As William Shakespeare said, 'I am a fruit of my dreams'. I have always believed this and I was lucky to read and to have a father who educated me, opened [my horizons], showed me other countries. And I used to travel through books. However, in our culture reading is not a part of our education. But luckily my father liked reading and transferred that custom to me and I used to look and say, 'I want to travel. I want to get to know the world'. I had a lot of desire to get to know other people and I came from, as they call it, 'a low income family'. But having a low income and being very poor, they used to laugh at me...and they used to tell me, 'you, you will not travel...never...impossible' and I used to say, 'I am going to make it one day', Marisol said.

As Marisol talked, she received a text message. It was her niece who was on a date with a newly met guy. Marisol asked her to keep in touch with her so that she knew that everything was well with her. Marisol continued to tell me about a natural disaster (heavy rains) on the coast of Venezuela, which occurred in 1999. "A very big one on a world scale", she said.

The sister of Marisol's uncle in-law called from Spain and asked,
"Hey I heard what happened in Venezuela; are you all ok?"
[Because it happened very close to the place where Marisol's grandparents live].
"Yes, we are all fine. There is no problem", Marisol's aunt responded and added, "Well now I am having a problem with my son who is not behaving well, and if you could give me a hand I would like to take him out of the country".
[She phoned after 15 days saying that it is ok to send Marisol's cousin to Spain and that she was going to give him a flight ticket as a gift].
"Marisol, do you know that I am going to a place called Spain; where is that?", Marisol's cousin asked.
"What? Do you not know where Spain is? I am going to show you", Marisol says.

“I knew where the countries were because our father used to play with us when we were children. We had a globe and we sat, closed our eyes and turned the globe and signalled [the place on the globe which our finger touched once the globe stopped after we gave it a spin]; the country that we stumbled on we would look in Alonso’s dictionary. We found out about the country thanks to this, because the Internet did not exist then.[...]”

“And my aunt tells me that later on they are going to send me to the UK; where is it?”, Marisol’s cousin asked.

“I know where the UK is. I am going to show you. Wow. You are going”, Marisol said.

“Yes, I am” [her cousin answered]

And it was December 1999.

Marisol had previously had other ideas of travelling. One of those ideas was to go to Japan to study English. However, when the opportunity arose for someone from her family to visit the UK, she wanted to use the situation. Her cousin did not like London and felt depressed. She could not understand it as “he was in a country full of history, and there is so much to learn, so much mythology; you can’t imagine how I was dying to be there’, she told me. Marisol went to speak with her Mum. And her whole family and friends helped her to buy the flight ticket because she could not afford it.

My dream was so big, and since I was a girl they used to listen to me about how I wanted to travel [...] My dream was so big and everyone put money towards it...and we organised a party to pay for the flight ticket. And so I came on 9th May 2000 to London and said to myself, “Wow, I feel at home here”, Marisol said.

Later on Marisol decided to move to Edinburgh after falling in love with a person who used to stay in Edinburgh. However, due to serious personal circumstances she had to go back to Venezuela after having spent five years in the UK. She wanted to return to the UK after a while, but she would not be granted a visa if she applied as she was not studying anymore at that time in the UK. She would not be granted a tourist visa either, as she had done so a couple of times before and had overstayed one of the times. “I will tell you a little bit more about my life, but we have to go back to when I was born”, Marisol says.

My name is Marisol. I was born in Barranquilla, Colombia. Before I turned one year old, I was taken to Venezuela. I was brought up in Venezuela but I did not know I was Colombian until I was 8-10 years old, because in Venezuela they didn’t like Colombians. My Mum – in order to protect me – did not tell me that I was Colombian, so I grew up thinking I was Venezuelan. Later, when I had already learned that I was Colombian, I went three times to Colombia, to Barranquilla. It was very good and I [thought]: ‘wow, very good, I like everything here but my heart is Venezuelan, Marisol continued.

As can be seen from the excerpt of a conversation I had with Marisol, our place of birth does not always determine our national identity, and how we perceive ourselves changes through one's life course. Marisol continued with her life story:

My Mum took us one at a time over the border with Venezuela. I was one year old and was supposed to stay with my family in Colombia, and then after a while after my Mum settled down she would come back for me....but her love for me was strong and she could not leave me, so she emptied her bag and put me inside the bag and took me with her. Only the transport of my mum was paid for, so when they realised that there was a child in the suitcase she had to convince them to take me as well.

"My father is going to pay for it when we arrive in Venezuela", my Mum told them.

And the man said, "Ok my darling..."

Because we had to pass through what is known as '*alcabalas*' – or checkpoints. [Marisol explained to me]: 'Alcabalas' are places on the road where police, 'la Guardia Nacional' [*The National Guard*], and militaries stop you and get onto the buses to check that there are no illegal immigrants – and we were travelling illegally. [...] Because also, everything is mafia. So the man [who was smuggling them over the border] told the soldiers and paid them, so they did not bother my Mum.

And said: 'what I am paying here your father needs to pay back'.

This was used a lot so that people could cross.

'But we do not have [money] to pay for your daughter'.

What they did when they were approaching a checkpoint, they were telling me to stay quiet, when the police were going down [checking the bus from the bottom] and I was with the entire luggage, inside a box. They put me in a box inside [the luggage compartment] from the bottom [of the truck] as I was always very small and I was slim. My mother kept telling me, she told me,

'Don't say anything, if not they will take you away and you will not be with me'. And I wanted to be with my Mum. And so I travelled. In this way, I crossed the border with Venezuela in a box, inside a bag. People gave my Mum food because she did not have money. She had nothing. And four dangerous checkpoints had passed. But my Mum told me that I behaved very well. Because I was only one year old and my Mum told me that when they were going down [the truck to check] everyone prayed so that I was not discovered by soldiers whilst hidden. And so I came to Venezuela. So I came without papers. I was no one. When my Mum met my stepfather, Antonio, my Mum told him to declare me to make me Venezuelan. But my father said that he was very afraid and my father is a very correct person and does not like these kinds of things. So it was possible to say that, because of such situations there were still home births. Nowadays only hospitals are used. So my mother met a lady who was a midwife and who said that she could testify that I was born at home, without any problems. It was a lie, but anyway. But they needed to find witnesses of me having been born at home. And so there would be no problems. But my father said,

"I am not going to give her my surname because I can go to jail if they find out. Everything is illegal".

When they declared me, my Mum presented me as Marisol Anna Orlando.

My surname is Italian, given to me by my father. But I only had one surname and I always had space for a second surname because we have two names and surnames. But my Mum said that my stepfather did not want [to give her his surname]. And this is how it was. God knows why he does things like this...’, Marisol recalled.

Immigrants become ‘nomads’ and their ‘identity’ is a ‘map’ with “an inventory of traces” (Braidotti 1994: 14, 37). The above paragraphs show different kinds of identity that Marisol has had during the process of ‘identity formation’, the ‘anchors to her historic position’ as well as the lack of identity she felt when she entered Venezuela and had no papers. In Marisol’s life story, one can see a ‘journey’ where she goes through her own identity. By taking various ‘steps’ in her life, i.e. changing places of residence, being surrounded by different people, going through various events in her life, as well as by way of having various ‘citizenship statuses’ she de-territorialises and de-conceptualises her identity. She is an individual “existing beyond particular communitarian arrangements, capable of authoring personal identity and properly at liberty to exercise this capacity” (Rapport and Stade 2007: 225). The story Marisol recalled in the above paragraphs unfolded in the 1970s; later on during our conversation Marisol moves back to the 2000s, in which she demonstrates how, through the change of her surname, i.e. receiving a second surname that she had space for, affects her identity.

So when I returned to Venezuela my Mum told me:

“do not worry, you will go back to the UK. You are going to study [that was Marisol’s dream] and you will make your dreams come true”.

My Mum went and spoke with the best friend of her godmother, who is Spanish, from Arrecife. He is a gentleman in his 70’s – spectacular, lovely, lovely. And he said,

“Look, I have problems with my daughter. This and that happened⁴⁰; how can we go about it? I want you to help my daughter because I want my daughter to have papers so that she can go again [to the UK]”.

And although we have rights to Italian papers by law, it is a slow process and at that very moment it was not possible. So my mum told him:

“We are going to do some business. I am going to pay you for her papers.”

Again, illegally. And my Mum said, “Calm down, you are going to have papers” and I replied, ‘Mum what have you done? I can’t get married again. I am married’. ‘No, no you are going to have a father’. ‘Father? What do you mean a father?’ She said, ‘calm down’.

A gentleman came and he adopted me, and he gave me his surname because I was lacking one, so my surname changed [...] he adopted me. We did everything legally. We went afterwards [...] made the papers and later I went to the Spanish embassy and requested a

⁴⁰ To maintain the confidentiality of the person I do not state what happened before and why she had to go back to Venezuela.

Spanish passport. I was touched. When we arrived, the consul did an interview with the three of us individually and later all together. My Mum invented a story around how they met. He was 70 years old and my Mum was 53 – in a relationship with a 70 year old? [...]. She invented a story and she told the gentleman, ‘you have to say this about how we met, and well, that Marisol is your daughter. And he said: ‘Ok’. And my Mum, they also asked her. And they asked me on my own and said, ‘you do not look like your father?’ You know they suspected something because he was blond. Blue eyes. And look, I am ‘negrita’ [meaning a girl with a darker complexion]. “Well. Yes, but you know I do not look like my Mum either. So I am the daughter of no one”, this was my answer. And in the end they gave me a passport.

Marisol managed to come back to the UK with her Spanish passport. The gentleman who adopted her in the end did not take the money he was offered by her Mum. He treated Marisol as his daughter and wanted to help. Marisol is in contact with her ‘father’. However, unfortunately he is ill now and does not remember much; but in spite of this she is in touch with him. He showed her his heart and gave her an opportunity to live her own life under her conditions. Nevertheless, having a new passport – a Spanish one in this case did not make her feel Spanish. Having an Italian surname does not make her feel Italian. Having lived for many years in the UK does not make her feel British. Being born in Colombia does not make her feel Colombian. She is Venezuelan and, as will be seen in the coming interview excerpt, Latin American, and she lives in Edinburgh. There were both times in her life when she felt like ‘a universal citizen’, as well as those when she described herself as ‘no one’. One could consider Marisol a ‘liminal persona’ who ‘elude[s] or slip[s] through the network of classifications that normally locate[s] states and positions in cultural space” (Turner 2002: 359). She is “neither here nor there, [...] betwixt and between the positions assigned and arrayed by law, custom, convention, and ceremonial” (ibid.: 359) Her life trajectory made her re-think who she is. She thought differently of herself during various stages of her life. Her life-journey shaped who she is now and how she perceives the world. However, it is not fixed and it might transform in future. In Marisol’s story one can see the co-existing identities that have varied in intensity through the course of her life. Identity, as one can see, is related to how one defines one’s ‘self’, not how one is perceived by others. It is also linked to being members of various groups. The resulting sense of belonging shapes our identity. Identity thus can change with the changes of the life course.

I was born in Colombia, I grew up in Venezuela; later I settled in the UK. I converted to a universal citizen because... every [place, country] has given me something. But my

heart is Venezuelan. My heart, in its deepest place, is Venezuelan and I am not going to give up being like that. I love my community and I try not to.... It's difficult for me to say I am Colombian and I was born in Colombia and my parents are Colombian. I would like to say it but I don't feel it. I can't say that I am Spanish because I only have papers. I am not Spanish. I can't say I am Scottish because I am not. I am Venezuelan. I am Latin American completely and that will never stop. At my home one eats the Latin American way, brings up children the Latin American way, and so my culture is maintained. I respect everything and I adopt where I go. When in Rome do as the Romans do. But at my home one still eats *arepas* for breakfast. One eats rice and black beans. Fried 'tajadas' (fried plantains). I will never stop being [like that]. Never. [...] I have always been in contact with the Latin-American community. [...] We are very similar because we meet and get together. When we meet... the day I organised Fernando's birthday, people from Colombia, Peru and Venezuela came. There were children and grannies; Scottish. We are very similar to each other. We are very similar, we are 'alborotados' (reflexive, excitable), we laugh lots. During our parties children, are together with adults until 12-1 in the morning. Children don't go to bed. Children are of us [part of us]. We are a collective. We are like trees... Without contact with the Latin-American community I could not have made.[...] But there is something that I feel when I go to Venezuela. I don't know how to explain it. I have never known what freedom is. It is a different sensation. I feel free here. Well, established, I don't have problems of any kind and I am grateful but when I go to Venezuela...it is like I believe in the word freedom. I say I am from here, I belong here. It is something...it is your language...it is everything. I would not have been able to be here for such a long time if I did not have my "Latin" community. I would not have been able, Marisol said.

As can be seen in Marisol's case, the evidence of her identities has been in her appearance, 'culture', passport, food, bringing up children, as well as in the language. It is expressed on an individual level in the experiences she has lived, and on an individual level when claiming the sense of belonging to a collective Venezuelan and Latin American identity. The status of being a member of the Latin American community is, for Marisol, strengthened by commonalities such as language, general behaviour and food. Marisol is open to ways of being other than her own, however her home is the place for cultivating her Venezuelan and Latin American identities.

For Marisol, being Latin American is like 'being a tree'. One can understand this metaphor in manifold ways. Marisol is like 'a tree' that is surrounded by other trees, other Latin Americans – her friends and family – during daily activities and special parties. Humans share "the same basic sensory capacities; these are developed and understood in different ways" (Howes and Classen 2014: 9). There are different types of trees as there are people in Latin America who come from different countries. In those

Latin American countries there are some ‘sensory symbols’ present that had only regional importance, but were transformed into national symbols by nation builders (ibid.: 72). Some of the symbols are dispersed across different Latin American countries. For instance, in Venezuela the ‘non-functional sensory symbols of statehood’ (ibid.: 72) are the national flag, the coat of arms and the national anthem. If one looks at, for instance, the Venezuelan flag that consists of three horizontal colours – yellow, blue and red – and then look at the national flags of, for instance, Colombia and Ecuador, one can see similarities. The territories of those three countries were part of Gran Colombia state⁴¹ between 1819 and 1831 (Martin and Wasserman 2012). After the secessions of these countries they had their national flags constructed based on Miranda’s tricolor flag of Gran Colombia (Tarver and Frederick 2005: 13). *Arepas* and *tajadas* – both of which Mirasol prepares and eats at home – are equally popular in Venezuela as they are in Colombia. Rice with beans, which Marisol prepares, is a popular dish in many Latin American countries. Rice was brought to Latin America by European colonisers, however African slaves had also brought with them a dish of rice and beans to Latin America (Carney 2001). Through colonisation and slavery in Latin America, various foods, musical forms and dances were disseminated across the region, and so today similar influences with regards to the above are visible. In each Latin American country there are also many ‘sensory symbols’, used by nation builders in the first instance to “represent the state and rally its citizens” (ibid.: 72) – and which are characteristic to particular countries – such as the orchid flower for Venezuela.

Coming back to the tree metaphor. Each tree has different branches and leaves/needles, and so it differs as much as people differ one from another, as far as their life experiences and individual differences. The tree-rings are like a person’s individual life paths, storing all the memories, experiences and knowledge. A piece of tree bark has inner and outer layers – just like people have different senses of belonging and life roles. The Latin American community is, ‘communita’,

society as an unstructured or rudimentarily structured and relatively undifferentiated *comitatus*, community, or even communion of equal individuals who submit together to the general authority of the ritual elders.

(Turner 2002: 360)

⁴¹ Northern Peru, Panama, northwest Brazil and western Guyana were also part of Gran Colombia (Martin and Wasserman 2012).

Marisol is first and foremost an individual, among other individuals who decided to belong to the Latin American community in Edinburgh. Marisol's 'nomadic identity' makes her perceive her freedom conditionally as security, stability and the possibility of moving across various countries and across various categories. She would not feel 'free' if she had never left Venezuela. The Latin American community is for her an existential resource whilst living in Edinburgh. We can see how her identity has evolved when looking at her individual biography. Being a 'nomad' made her "create those necessarily stable and reassuring bases for identity that allow one to function in a community" (Braidotti 1994: 33). "We have to go now". Marisol told Fernando, her partner, that she was about to finish; an hour had passed since then and we still hadn't finished. He had been waiting for Marisol outside the café.

Collective system of representation; Manuel's personal boundaries

'There are only three places that serve good coffee in Edinburgh. Café Kilimanjaro. Artisan Roast and Brew Lab', Manuel wrote to me on Facebook Messenger.

'Why do we not meet in Brew Lab? I have never been there before', I reply.

'Perfect. See you there tomorrow'.

I had an interesting discussion with Manuel, who is from Ecuador, which demonstrates what it means to be 'Latin American' for him. During our conversation he drew on the internal national differences in South America related to the friendliness of people, as well as regional differences. According to Manuel people from the tropical area of South America are friendlier (he named Ecuadorians, Colombians, Venezuelans and Brazilians from the tropical part of Brazil). He emphasised that "Chileans and Argentinians are also friendly but they are more formal".

We are always like that [people help each other] but it depends on the region, because in Ecuador I come from the coast 'Costa'. In the South we are more open, but people from 'La Sierra' – Quito – they are a little bit more shy. It depends on where they come from. We are from the Coast, and Coast people are all about Salsa music and all that stuff. I

come from the mountains so I am not that 'Coastal', but these are people from the Coast, Manuel said.

During our conversation, Manuel – after looking at some differences between Latin Americans when they socialise with each other – mentioned similarities that Latin Americans share. Those are his emotional stereotypes. He believes that they all concentrate on what they share and not what divides them. He told me that as part of his studies he went to the Botanic Gardens in Edinburgh, where he met around 12 very friendly male research students from Colombia. On the day he went to the Botanic Gardens he had a conversation and drank beer with the Colombians and three Spaniards. Girls from Madrid had an argument with a guy from Barcelona, complaining about Catalonia, saying that many of its members frequently detach themselves from Spain and perceive Catalonia as an autonomous region that is not part of Spain. It was a bad argument, Manuel said.

And we showed them that we always try to look for commonalities between us in Latin America. I like that about Latin America, we always try to look for areas in which we are similar to the others; but here in Europe people always want to see what makes you different to others. We are not like that, Manuel told me.

Manuel has contradictory views on similarities and differences among Ecuadorians and between different Latin American countries. He refers to regional differences among Ecuadorians, as well as between people from Latin American countries when discussing the life of people in Ecuador and in Latin America as a whole. On the contrary, when he talks about his life in Edinburgh, he notices that there are many similarities among Latin American immigrants and in conversations he recurrently mentioned those.

Later on during our discussion, Manuel mentioned how – according to him – Latin American immigrants by and large help each other and have a sense of collectiveness.

I think Chileans and Mexicans, because they are big communities - they are trying to stick together and take care of the others; look after each other. I know now, for example, that Mexicans are trying to help a girl from Mexico in Manchester, so everybody is worried about her. And I like this about Latin America. Everybody, maybe you don't notice it, but everybody sends a text, calls somebody and somebody says, 'yes I can be there that day and everything can be fixed'. But this is a kind of automatic flow. People help each other. Maybe it is also like this with other countries, but [it is] between 'Latinos', Manuel said.

For many Latin Americans, as I argued throughout the thesis, it is family that is the most important. Patricia, originally from Ecuador, who immigrated first to Spain and later to the UK, told me that when she lived in Spain many of her Spanish friends could not understand that for her it is her family that is most important, and that weekends are the time she spends with her husband and sons and does not go out as much with her friends. Many Latin Americans in Edinburgh maintain strong personal transnational links with family members who live in other countries⁴². Family networks are important for Latin Americans when they migrate, however those who migrate without having any members of family in the place they move to construct their ‘social capital’⁴³ (Bourdieu 1986) differently. As Vitak and Ellison (2012: 244) explain, extending Bourdieu’s idea, ‘social capital’ is about “how individuals’ personal relationships provide access to informational and support-based resources”. Bourdieu and Wacquant (1992: 119) defined social capital as

the sum of the resources, actual or virtual, that accrue to an individual or a group by virtue of possessing a durable network of more or less institutionalized relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition.

Back at home, many have large families and frequently live close to the extended family. Members of the family help each other and remain loyal to each other (Condon 1984: 24). Maintaining contact with family, including the extended family, is very important. It is common for many Latin Americans to rely on relatives and close friends when needing help and support (ibid.: 25). Like Haran⁴⁴, who wants to move back to Peru in order to be helped and cared for if needed – and surrounded by his family and friends when he gets older. When living in Edinburgh many Latin Americans do not want to be on their own, and as such, making and maintaining friendships and constituting communities is helpful in their day-to-day life and in expanding their ‘social capital’. Stowers (2003), who carried out her research among Salvadoran migrants in the USA, emphasised the strong responsibility that they have towards their family and community. Salvadorans depend on solid extended family ties and community networks when in need to ascertain some resources, reallocate wealth and

⁴² More on transnational personal links p. 190-3.

⁴³ More on ‘social capital’ in Chapter 6 on ‘How Latin Americans stay in touch’.

⁴⁴ p.194-7.

give social support (ibid.: 67). Many Salvadorans send funds to support their children and other family members and friends whom they left behind (ibid.: 69). Salvadorans' value of community is juxtaposed in the USA with the US culture of individualism that is counter to what Salvadorans believe is best for them and their community (Stowers 2003: 70).

Manuel commented that being part of communities gives one a chance to help and to be helped, when needed. Many Latin Americans build non-familial relationships in Edinburgh (Condon 1985: 24) through, for instance, sharing food, *compadrazgo* – godparent relationships, presenting and calling some of the closest friends to their children as aunts and uncles, or maintain strong relationships with their friends. Williams (1984: 119) described how the preparation of *tamales* by Mexican immigrants in the USA, and sharing it with extended family, friends and acquaintances leads to the construction of fictive-familial relationships.

Latin Americans in Edinburgh build strong fictive-familial relationships with other Latin Americans, not particularly from the same country as they are from, and with non Latin Americans. Many also live in Edinburgh with their partner, and some of them have children. However, most Latin Americans' parents, siblings, grandparents, extended family and godparents live abroad. As such, by expanding their 'social capital' and building pseudo-familial networks of friends and members of the Latin American 'community' and some non-Latin Americans, Latin Americans fill in the absence of their families. Many people from different Latin American countries support each other a lot. I observed this helpfulness and openness among the Latin Americans themselves. Moreover, I experienced it myself as a researcher during my fieldwork. People I had just met or I knew only via Facebook invited me to their homes, to various parties as well as recommended me speaking with their friends or acquaintances in order to help me with my project. The Latin Americans I met are open to the creation of networks of inclusion.

I met Pepe, originally from Ecuador by coincidence. I went to do an interview with Karim, originally from Peru. My Peruvian friend, Maria, put us in touch. He agreed to help me with my project and so he invited me to his home. I did not know Karim before

our interview. I arrived at his place for the first time. I entered the living room and I was introduced straight away to Pepe, from Ecuador. His wife prepared us coffee and we all started having a general conversation. After a couple of minutes I realised that they did not know each other. When I was introduced to Pepe I was told that they *lo encontraron* [‘met him’] in Lidl an hour before our interview and they invited him to their home as they thought he would be useful for my project. It was lovely that people whom I had never met before decided to help me so much. However, this did not cause my surprise. It was more about the presence of Pepe. When they told me about Pepe when I came in they used the verb *encontrarse*, so I thought that Pepe was their friend and that they had just happened to meet him on that day that we all met. However, clearly they did not know each other because they started having the type of conversation that people completely new to each other would have. So I had to ask Karim and Lorena, “but did you know each other before?” And they answered, “No, we just met him an hour ago and thought he could help you with your project”. They did not use the word *conocer* [‘get to know’] when they introduced Pepe. They just said ‘we met him’, so it had a double meaning, as you can meet someone you know or meet someone for the first time, but that detail was not specified. They treated the situation as if it was normal. I was quite surprised because it is not common, at least in my experience, to invite a complete stranger to your house – but they did. Lorena, during that meeting, offered to help Pepe complete some forms so that he could apply for state benefits.



Figure 3.2 Top photograph: a doll in a folkloric Mexican dress, bottom left: a fleece cat, bottom right: Mezcal, Reposado and Tequila [Photographs taken by Myriam, of some of the items she brought with her to Mexico]

For Manuel, being ‘Latin American’ is also about a ‘way of being and acting’, about being more open and taking things more as they come. The other aspect he mentioned

during our conversation about the Latin American collective identity is the shared history of oppression which I mentioned in the introduction.

I think that we ‘Latinos’ always try to find things in which we are similar to others, for example, Colombians and Venezuelans. For example, when Victoria⁴⁵ was talking about violence in Venezuela. Venezuela is doing things very wrong. And we know, in every country we have been through times of military coups and lots of things, so we know [what] the others feel. How it is that somebody disappears? It is a neighbour or a friend. So we all know this. You in Eastern Europe you know all that shit. When something is happening, we know how to deal with it. We don’t talk too much. We understand immediately everything that is going on, Manuel said.

For many Latin Americans in Edinburgh, the ‘shared past’ is something that brings them together and erases the differences between various Latin Americans. Many Latin Americans in Edinburgh evoke the ‘common’ past of colonialism, the struggle for independence, the coup d’états and the wars that the Latin American countries have gone through. These painful collective memories are linked to supranational Latin American identity. At the same time, according to Manuel, Latin Americans do share happiness.

My own concept of what we share...I think we share from Latin America this thing that is being happy with simple things; but I mean really happy. You can see people here – you have a nice country; it could be seen as one of the best countries in the world if they had independence. Whatever, but people are not happy. And us over there – with violence, crisis, corruption, thieves and strikes on the streets. We are just happy, Manuel said.

Happiness is not a pre-existing phenomenon, but rather a compound, idiosyncratic and narratively purposely-created human construct. It comes to life by means of conversations and nonverbal communication (Thin 2012). There is no one “pursuit of happiness”. How one imagines, communicates and experience happiness varies in meaning in different places, societies and cultural contexts (Mathews and Izquierdo 2009: 1). Happiness is the life experience of being well. Its drivers can differ across cultures and individuals, as they depend on the different values and identity one has (Rojas 2015: 9). Manuel, when discussing happiness, compares himself with the selves of others. In our conversation he gives examples of Scottish unhappiness. “We vary greatly in the degree to which we perceive our happiness as dependent on other peoples’

⁴⁵ She is a Venezuelan girl who co-organised and spoke at the conference on ‘Human rights violation in Venezuela’, organised at the University of Edinburgh.

happiness, on our contributions to others' happiness" (Thin 2005: 41). Manuel generalises about Latin Americans whom he considers to be generally happy, based on a comparison with the Scottish people whom he met in Edinburgh and who he believes are not happy. One can see here that differences exist in the concept of his happiness and what he thinks makes Scottish people happy. For Manuel, one is happy irrespective of politics in the country where one lives. No matter what financial or economic situation one is in. Even though he acknowledges that in Latin America there are a lot of problems with violence, robberies, people striking or corruption, according to him those factors do not impact so much on one's happiness. He claims: 'We are just happy'. For Manuel, there is a difference in the interaction between internal and external factors of happiness between Latin Americans and Scottish, based on his idea of happiness. "External conditions provide potentials for happiness, and internal processes act as filters for real world experience. These two processes mutually affect each other" (Ahuvia et al. 2015: 13). Manuel himself relies more on the internal factors, and believes that other Latin Americans do the same, whereas the Scottish people he met – as he believes – base their happiness more on external conditions because, according to him, they complain a lot and their happiness depends on how much money they have, what job they have, what their government does, what the weather is, or on their possessions such as a new flat or an expensive car that can – according to them – increase their status and make them feel happier. What it means to be happy, as described by Manuel, echoes how he projects his life trajectory and what his attitude is towards happiness (Thin 2005: 40-2). His view on how one achieves happiness is different to what happiness is for the Scots he knows.

The fact that many Latin Americans are by and large happy was acknowledged on many occasions during my fieldwork. Especially when some Latin Americans noticed who they are not, i.e. for instance, that their Scottish friends or people generally in the street behave differently to what they would. Lorena commented that perhaps it is also connected to Edinburgh's weather – frequent rain, wind and a grey sky. "Whenever there is a sunny day you can see more people going out and smiling. Even on buses people seem to be friendlier", Gilberto said. He also told me that when he lived in Venezuela he took good, sunny weather for granted, as where he lived the weather was always good. After coming to Edinburgh he realised that it is not like this everywhere.

Javier struggled to cope with the weather conditions. He felt depressed and had problems with insomnia. Luis, from Bolivia, realised that Edinburgh perhaps cannot offer good weather, but it is a great city to live in. He has been living in the UK for over 16 years. “The weather in Edinburgh is not going to change and so I just continue to live my life. I do not pay attention to the weather and do not make my happiness and wellbeing depend on its conditions. For me, having many friends, going out and dancing salsa makes me feel optimistic and happy”, Luis told me.

Manuel also commented that he thinks that Latin Americans in Edinburgh also have in common a high level of sociality.

Ahhh.. the other thing is that ‘Latinos’, what they do not like here, we look into the eyes of people on the street. Men and women; if you are a woman on the street and you like a man you can say something, or you can smile at that person. And nothing happens. And I like to do the same. But here it’s impossible. You can go to jail. Because people think, ‘there is a smile, someone is looking at me’. That is what I miss about Latin America. I was talking with someone about it. And you can talk to someone you do not know. You can say ‘hey how are you?’ But here, people are like ‘...ehh? What does he want?’ ‘Latinos’, when we see a baby we say...ooo! A baby..yeeeh! [...]', Manuel said.

Manuel acknowledges different principles of interaction between Latin Americans and Scots. He believes that Latin Americans possess those interpersonal skills that allow them easily to interact with various people. There are obviously some shy people among Latin Americans who are not so easy-going and they prefer socialising in smaller groups. However, at the events or parties I attended there were always many laid-back and confident people who, without hesitation, introduced themselves to people they did not know before. This friendly and relaxing atmosphere is also a feature at these events, and it is so welcoming to everyone.

During our conversation, Manuel also shared with me his theory on what makes Latin American identity. He emphasised that he believes Latin Americans have food, language and history in common.

I think this is also because of history. Venezuela, Colombia and Ecuador were one country and later on there were all the divisions. We have similarities with Colombia – the climate. If you grab me by the hair and put me in Venezuela I look Venezuelan, and the same with Victoria and others. I think there are things that make us different but when we speak about food, we only change the name but we use the same ingredients; the same things. For me we, as ‘Latinos’, I think it is because of the language, because of the

climate. From where we come, we share history, civil wars, and [...]... we see everybody as [the same as] others, Manuel said.

As far as food and drinks are concerned, there are obviously many differences between cuisines in various Latin American countries. For some Latin Americans they are more distinguishable and important than for others. However, there are always one or two dishes or drinks that are very similar to the ones prepared by the people from neighbouring countries. Sometimes it is just a name that is different. Some other times, for instance, the ingredients or herbs used differ slightly. Rice and beans, *empanadas*⁴⁶ or *tamales* are known under different names in many Latin American countries and are served with various fillings, and in the case of, for instance, *tamales* they are made of different leaves. Different types of Mesoamerican *tamales* are popular throughout various parts of Latin America. In Argentina, Ecuador, parts of northern Chile, Bolivia, and Peru *tamales* are called *humitas* (Sanabria 2007: 255). In Venezuela and Colombia they are known as *hallacas*. In Central America, for example, in Nicaragua they are called *nacatamal* and are wrapped in banana leaves (not in corn husks) (ibid.: 255). When I went to a Mexican food stall in Edinburgh I ordered *tamales*, and when I went to a Venezuelan one they were selling *hallacas*. “Food and cuisine have a capacity to evoke feelings of shared belonging and community” (Sanabria 2007: 270). Many Latin Americans, by preparing various dishes together from different Latin American countries, eating together and also sharing food, strengthen their belonging to the Latin American community. Food brings many Latin Americans together.

The tales of a beloved food shared by a particular group, a smell that evokes “home”, or the rhythms of a national anthem conjuring a sense of a shared belonging, reassure through taste, remembered smell, or sound that here is something that binds us in fellow feeling.

(Trnka et al. 2015: 5)

On 2nd February I went to a Mexican celebration – ‘Día de la Candelaria: Tamaliza and tamales workshop’ organised by the Mexican society. Although the event was Mexican, it brought together people from different Latin American countries (apart from Mexicans there were some Colombians, Chileans, Venezuelans and Ecuadorians) and non-Latin Americans (such as Greek, Polish, Scottish and American). There are cultural

⁴⁶ *Empanadas* are baked or fried turnovers made of pastry dough or bread dough, stuffed with savoury or sweet fillings.

and biological natures of human eating habits (Mintz 2008). “Food is essential to life”, however “if to eat is to live, then to live must be to eat” (ibid.: 103). Food has different purposes. “Eating does unite all living things; but not all living things eat in the same manner, nor even with the same intensions.” (Mintz 2008: 103). People who came to the event were united through eating, however each of them came for different reasons. Some Mexicans told me that they came because they wanted to celebrate ‘Día de la Candelaria’ with other Latin Americans while being away from ‘home’. Other Mexicans have been living in Scotland for a long time and only now realised that they long for what is Mexican and that is why they decided to attend the event. Some Colombians and Venezuelans told me that they wanted to come, prepare and eat *tamales* as the dish is also popular in their countries and they like it a lot. However, they had not prepared it for a long time in Edinburgh as it is very time consuming. Preparing *tamales* is a social act during which, as one girl told me, people talk with each other, make jokes and gossip.

Heriot Watt University’s Chaplaincy and its lounge, dining room and kitchen – where the event took place, converted into a Latin American community culinary space. That day, everyone together prepared *tamales*, following the guidance of two Mexican guys who followed one recipe from Chiapas and the other a general one. The organisers of the event prepared the stuffing for the *tamales* on the same day, prior to the event and brought it with them when attending. One of the stuffings for the *tamales* was with chicken in *mole* [sauce] and the other one with fried beans, chilli and cheese. People spread around the long table in the dining room where everyone participated in making *masa* [‘a dough’] for the *tamales*, and later wrapped them. Some of the ingredients were bought in *Lupe Pintos* – a shop in Tollcross. It is a shop that specialises in Spanish and Latin American products. The plantain leaves were bought in Leith in a shop called *Christine African Grocery Store*. Some Mexicans brought snacks that they bought in their home country with them to the event. They were particularly enjoying eating lollipops and candies – one with tamarind and chilli, which were sour and spicy; the other with mango and chilli, which were sweet and spicy. The taste of those sweets was familiar to them and they greatly enjoyed it. The group of people I sat with talked about how it reminded them of their childhood.

For the *tamales* we used the ready-made *masa* mix – *Maseca* – lard and meat broth or butter and vegetable broth for the vegetarian version. In large bowls, we placed *Maseca* along with pre-heated lard or butter, and combined it together using our hands. Then adding broth slowly we combined it all together. We kneaded the ingredients until we got the dough smooth and moist. We wrapped some *tamales* with corn husks and others with plantain leaves that were soaked previously in hot water. We tied them with some thread. The preparation of the *tamales* took a long time. Everyone participated. While some people were finishing wrapping the *tamales*, others were in the kitchen cooking them. During the process of preparation of *tamales* – which was very time consuming, while waiting for the *tamales* to be cooked, and while eating, people chatted to each other and many also had a chance to meet new people. People chatted, danced, children played. For Latin Americans I learned that the preparation of food, its sharing and eating has an important social role. It evokes feelings of togetherness and of a shared belonging. Food is connected to smell and taste. It brings back memories of ‘home’.

What we eat, when, where, and how we eat it, and with whom, are intricately connected with the creation of memory, collective identity, and power. Cooking, eating, taste, and smell, central as they are to the practical rituals of everyday life, are also often bound to memories of “home”.

(Trnka et al. 2013: 19)

Some Latin Americans, because they long for the food they ate in their countries of origin, take many opportunities to go to Latin American food stalls in Edinburgh, participate in the events – such as the described ‘Tamaliza’, meet with friends at home and cook together. Some others, as described in the section about ‘home’, grow at their homes in Edinburgh the spices and vegetables that they cannot buy here. Others ask their friends and family to send them a parcel with some of the food products⁴⁷.

I saw that many Latin Americans in Edinburgh from various countries drink *mate* at home, which is also known as *yerba mate* and under many other names. Some also drink *aguapanela*, which is a drink made of an unrefined sugar cane that they drink with warm or cold water, either on its own or with milk, lemon or lime. What is common for many Latin Americans is that food plays an important role when various celebrations

⁴⁷ More in Chapter 7 on ‘home-making’ processes of the Latin Americans in Edinburgh.

are organised. For birthday parties or baby showers, many ensure that there are nicely decorated homemade cakes. When home-parties are organised, people frequently decide in advance who is going to bring what. Everyone brings one dish or two and something to drink. During my fieldwork I observed that Latin American businesses offering street food have become popular in Edinburgh. For instance, every two weeks in the Grassmarket and at Stockbridge Market one can eat Venezuelan *arepas* and *hallacas*. There is also *Tupiniquim Brasil Crepes Edinburgh* on Meadow Walk, serving crepes during the week, freshly squeezed juices and on Saturdays *feijoada*⁴⁸.



Figure 3.3 photographs taken by me of the Brazilian food stall, *Tupiniquim*, on Meadow Walk. On the left, the Juice Bike; at the bottom, *feijoada*; at the top, *crepes*

⁴⁸ *Feijoada* is a meat stew with black beans, served with rice.

Mighty Mexicans serve *burritos*, either on Tramstop Market opposite St Mary's Cathedral, or in the Grassmarket. On Facebook, on various Latin American groups, one can see people offering their food services. As such, you can order, for example, "Cakes with a Latin touch", *tamales*, Chilean *empanadas* or Brazilian *pastel*.

There are also many Latin American restaurants in Edinburgh. However, most of these are not owned by Latin Americans. The food in those places tastes different to "at home", I have been told, so not many Latin Americans go there frequently. Quite popular amongst people I have met is the Viva Mexico restaurant on Cockburn Street. For Latin American food products, many go to Lupe Pintos Shop on Tollcross, or Caoba on Raeburn Place. For some other food products, including vegetables that they would otherwise not find in Edinburgh, many Latin Americans go to various Chinese markets, for instance on Tollcross and Leith Walk, to African shops on Gorgie Road or Leith, and various Pakistani and Indian shops located throughout Edinburgh. Some members of the Latin American 'community' are linked to other established migrant communities by shopping at their shops and supermarkets.

The Latin American 'community' in Edinburgh is very diversified. Many members of the Latin American 'community' who come from different Latin American countries are brought together as a whole based on a set of symbols that they share. In this section I presented Manuel's set of symbols and behaviours that he believes Latin Americans in Edinburgh share, as well as his interpretation of them, and also my observations as an 'anthropologist in the field', in relation to the aforementioned symbols and behaviours. As Cohen (1985: 12-3,15) argues, each community has a boundary that is a symbolic construct, created mainly through social interactions. For Cohen (1985: 12), a boundary

encapsulates the identity of the community and, like the identity of an individual, is called into being by the exigencies of social interaction. Boundaries are marked because communities interact in some way or other with entities from which they are, or wish to be, distinguished (see Barth 1969). The manner in which they are marked depends entirely upon the specific community in question. [...] But not all boundaries, and not *all* the components of *any* boundary, are so objectively apparent. They may be thought of, rather existing in the minds of their beholders. This being so, the boundary may be perceived in rather different terms, not only by people on opposite sides of it, but also by people on the same side.

Different people attach different meanings to boundaries. The boundaries acknowledged by Manuel might not be visible to others, especially by those from outside. The more subjective the boundaries are, the more significant a role they play to their members, as they are linked with “increasingly intimate areas of their lives, or refer to more substantial areas of their identities” (Cohen 1985: 13). Manuel acknowledges the boundaries between ‘Latin Americans in Edinburgh’ and ‘others in Edinburgh’. However, he also sees the boundaries in South America related to, for instance, openness and friendliness of people from various South American countries based on the climate of the place one is from. I have not heard any other Latin American in Edinburgh throughout my fieldwork referring to such a distinction based on the climate of the South American country one is from. Manuel works for a bird-watching tour company and is interested in nature. The described boundary is related to Manuel’s personal interests and the way he perceives the world.

Boundaries can be shared by a variety of people who attribute their own meanings to them. However, individuals also have their own subjective personal boundaries that are specific to them. It may happen that some other people also share them. Based on the meaning Manuel has attached to the boundaries that Latin Americans in Edinburgh share, and to his own subjective boundaries, he has constructed his Latin American identity. When Manuel immigrated to Edinburgh he told me that he began to perceive Latin Americans as one group, as he noticed many similarities people from various Latin American countries share. He became aware of these similarities while interacting with non-Latin Americans in Edinburgh across boundaries.

Throughout this thesis, I refer to Anthony Cohen’s symbolic aspect of community boundaries (1985), who developed Fredrik Barth’s notion of ethnic groups’ boundaries and their social interactions. As aforementioned, Latin Americans are diversified. They come from different countries and encompass various ethnic groups. It would be incorrect to treat Latin Americans or even a particular country in Latin America as an ethnic group, therefore Anthony Cohen’s use of community boundaries as symbolic boundaries, rather than Barth’s ethnic boundaries (1969), in relation to the Latin American ‘community’ in Edinburgh, seems to me more appropriate in this context.

Manuel is aware of the boundaries between people from various Latin American countries. In our conversation he also acknowledged regional differences in Ecuador, but whilst abroad he does not concentrate on ‘maintaining these boundaries’ (Barth 1969). They exist; however, more important are the new boundaries that he has created with other ‘members’ of the Latin American ‘community’ in Edinburgh. Drawing from Cohen (1985: 55, 14), various individuals from the Latin American ‘community’ in Edinburgh perceive ‘Latin American-ness’ by themselves via the use of commonly accepted symbols, attaching their own meaning and through their own individual experiences.

What it means to be Latin American is something personal. The attempt to establish who one is and where one belongs is a personal journey in which one continuously constructs and deconstructs one’s identity in relation to the multiple forms of belonging. Latin American immigrants’ identity is shaped by the collective system of representation that the members of the Latin American ‘community’⁴⁹ in Edinburgh acknowledge in their language, music, food and traditions as well as when relating to the ‘shared’ history⁵⁰. Latin Americans in Edinburgh, by referring to Latin American identity, have been representing themselves by exceeding the boundaries of their national identity. Multiple senses of belonging and identifications are “an inner scaffolding that supports one’s sense of identity” (Braidotti 2006: 90).

⁴⁹ See Chapter 5 on the Latin American ‘community’.

⁵⁰ See Chapter 1 for the ‘shared’ history.

Chapter 4 – Latin American Dynamics

I enter the room in Tollcross Community Centre, where the ‘Latin America sings in Edinburgh’ group meets on a regular basis. I wait for Mercedes to come, as she promised to introduce me to the members of the group that she knew from the times she attended the sessions herself. She arrives late, so in the meantime I scan the room and find a free seat. I see people coming to the room, giving hugs and kisses to greet each other. Some people approach me with a kiss and introduce themselves. Others smile from a distance and wave hello. They all acknowledge my presence. We wait a little bit for others to come. In the meantime I can hear people talking about what they did before coming here and what their plans for the holidays are. Carlos, the organiser of the group arrives. He greets everyone and, as he tunes his guitar, he discusses with some people the order of the songs that will be sung today. Most people take out folders with photocopies of the songs, music sheets and lyrics. He asks what my name is and where I am from. I introduce myself and tell him the reason I came to the group, explaining about my university project and ask whether he agrees for me to attend the group. He says it is fine but that we should wait for everyone to come, so that I can briefly tell everyone about my research and introduce myself. Mercedes arrives when the others are already there. We look at each other and smile. She explains to Carlos why I am here. He already knows. And so I introduce myself again to the whole group and ask them for permission to attend their meetings and to take notes of my observations. They are all fine about me staying. They give me photocopies of the songs that we will be singing. On each photocopy there is a song title with its author, the date it was composed and the country in Latin America that the song is from. Carlos says to me that in this group they talk about their origins and keep the memories of their countries alive, just as they remember them when they left. They sing different Latin American songs, and in-between singing they discuss the histories and contexts of the songs in order to learn from each other about different Latin American countries. In one of the interviews about “The Smallest Latin American Festival in The World. Edinburgh, Scotland”, which Carlos organised with the group in 2010, he says, ‘We all love our countries, but we have to start loving our continent’ (Arredondo 2011-2012). As he said in the

interview, Latin Americans in Edinburgh represent a vast continent and his main objective in organising different events is “in our small community in Edinburgh [...] to be able to say one day – *I am Latin American*” (ibid.: 2011-2012, own italicisation).

When I spoke on different occasions with some members of the group, many told me that it is important for them to talk about their origins and to have an opportunity to spend time with other Latin Americans. Carolina, one of the past members of the group, told me about attending the group.

I felt how nice it is to sing in Spanish and how nice it is to have that space to be able to speak Spanish. So I think it was a very pleasant satisfaction to be able to express myself in Spanish. And it was like [having] a break after the whole week. If 7 days a week you speak English, to have those 2 hours that I had to be able to speak Spanish and to be able to have a dynamic in Spanish, the Latin American dynamics as well. What happens with Spaniards, although they speak Spanish, the dynamics, physical contact is different to Latin American contact. Latin American contact is much closer, touching each other, kissing, making *bromas pesadas* [‘bad jokes’/‘practical jokes’]. A Spaniard, apart from the fact that he speaks Spanish is European and has a different social dynamic, and [type] of contact. So I really enjoyed those 3 years that I spent in this choir, Carolina said.

The sense of ‘Latin American-ness’ is given to Carolina when speaking Spanish with her Latin American friends, but not with Spaniards who – even though they also speak Spanish – differ in their style of communication and do not make her feel the same bond that she feels with Spanish-speaking Latin Americans. Carolina admitted that there are more similarities in the ways of communication between Spanish-speaking Latin Americans and Portuguese speaking Latin Americans, such as Brazilians, than with Spaniards. What gives Carolina, and many other people with whom I spoke during my fieldwork, the sense of ‘Latin American-ness’ is what she calls ‘Latin American dynamics’. Verbal communication is important, however “touch precedes, informs and overwhelms language” (Classen 2005: 13). With this in mind, I will argue in this chapter that non-verbal communication between Latin Americans is central to the construction of ‘Latin American-ness’.

In this chapter I will first explore what ‘Latin American dynamics’ is for some Latin Americans in Edinburgh. Subsequently, I will look at how stereotypes are used in order to create knowledge about one’s self, and as a result how their existence influences Latin Americans’ understanding of ‘what it means to be Latin American’. Stereotypes enable basic and fantastic assertions about “a group’s manifold membership” but also

“individuals can use stereotypes for cognitively mapping and then anchoring themselves within a conventional and secure social landscape” (Rapport and Overing 2000: 343-346).

Latin American dynamics; Carolina’s viewpoint

“Edinburgh is a physically beautiful and enigmatic city”, Carolina from Mexico tells me, while explaining what she thinks of Edinburgh. Many Latin Americans during my fieldwork told me that whenever they go to other cities in the UK, they are thinking about coming back to Edinburgh. Some people, when they visit their families in Latin America, miss Edinburgh. When they land back in Edinburgh they think, ‘oh finally I am back home’. After having lived in various cities, Carolina realised that every city has its pros and cons, and that there are cities in which she feels better than others. She came initially to Edinburgh for 6 months to improve her English before commencing her PhD. She liked the city so much that she extended her stay for another year. During her initial 6-month stay in Edinburgh, she tried to get involved in everything Scottish. She attended pubs where Scottish folk music was played and made Scottish friends – but also met people from various different countries such as Italy, Spain and Poland. She did not have many Latin American friends during the first year of her stay. Later on she met her future husband-to-be, who is Scottish. Carolina recalled living for a year and a half in Spain, in San Sebastián, where she did not feel as comfortable as she does in Edinburgh, even though people there speak Spanish.

What I like in Edinburgh, apart from its physical beauty, is that there are people from so many different countries, because as there are universities you get to know people from different countries. So here you meet people of all types. But what I like in Edinburgh is that you see precisely the Latin American community. At that time I discovered this ‘Latin American identity’ that I did not have in other countries. Precisely after having settled down here and lived for a longer time here [in Edinburgh], you have time to create your social circles, Carolina commented.

The Latin American ‘community’ and Latin American identity are things that surface for some in Edinburgh and not elsewhere. Carolina studied English at Stevenson College, where she met Carlos who was a point of contact for many Latin Americans. ‘As he is a musician and presents himself publically, he is like a focal point attracting

Latin Americans', Carolina said. Carlos was responsible for the Computer room in Stevenson College, and everyone at some point had to go and use computers; and so she met him there. He knew many people from Latin America. When he created the singing group 'Latin America sings in Edinburgh', Carolina started attending its sessions and meeting more Latin Americans there, including other Mexicans with whom she did not have much contact previously. With the singing group, she shared a common interest of wanting to sing various Latin American songs in Spanish, and having this space for the 'Latin American dynamics' mentioned above.

This was really three years ago. My first year, I spent in Edinburgh. I did not have much contact with Latin American people or Mexicans because I was very involved in my PhD. I had more contact with Scottish people because I used to attend a gym. I am a member of a club where there is a swimming pool and a gym, so that was my contact with the Scottish people. Through Carlos, and through the singing group that used to meet in the Tollcross Community Centre I started meeting Latin American people, some Mexicans, who were also at Stevenson College and who also got together because of Carlos. And at that time another 'point' arose – Mercedes, because she is also very sociable. So you know, you go to her parties. She is another point of contact with the community because she has contact with all the Peruvian community, which connects with a few Bolivians, among others. So Latin American parties were a point of contact for meeting more people, Carolina said.

From attending some meetings of the singing group, various home parties and formal parties such as the *fiestas patrias*, I could see what Carolina told me about the 'Latin American dynamics' that is so important to her and gives her a stronger sense of Latin American identity. I could see how important for many Latin Americans it is to express their emotions freely and to build strong emotional bonds when interacting with other people. The physical distance between Latin Americans was smaller than at the meetings I attended, where there were Scottish people and some Latin Americans.

Non-verbal communication

Ten months into my fieldwork, I was sitting with Maria in the church hall of Saint Ninian's Church in Corstorphine at the *Fiestas Patrias peruanas* celebration [Celebration of the Peruvian Independence]. Mercedes hired the hall for the purpose of

hosting the event. Mercedes is the main organiser of the events of the Peruvian community in Edinburgh. The interior was decorated with a large Peruvian flag, which is a horizontal tri-band with red, white and red again. There were tables set with soft drinks, and a table where traditional Peruvian food was served. Mercedes came dressed in red and white, the colours that are important “non-functional sensory symbols” (Howes and Classen 2014: 72) of Peru. We were all also given red and white *escarapela* [a round bi-colour ribbon with the colours of the Peruvian flag] to wear. Peruvians usually wear this during the celebrations of their country’s Independence Day.

As we were having a chat and agreeing on going together to one of the salsa parties in Edinburgh, more friends joined our table. Laura came with her daughters, Diana and Rosa. Diana came alone and Rosa with her husband. At the party, there were people from different Latin American and non-Latin American countries. Many came with their families. There were many kids running all over the place. Many of the people who came to the event knew each other, but on that day there was also a couple of newcomers whom Mercedes had invited to come along. People welcomed them and made a space for them at one of the tables next to ours. They engaged straight away in a conversation. As I went later for some food, I greeted and had a quick chat with Pedro, who is originally from Peru, and who had just moved from Spain to Edinburgh with his family. At that moment one of my favourite Colombian Salsa songs ‘Cali Pachanguero’, by Grupo Niche was played. I could not stand still at that point. I wanted to dance, and so did Pablo, whom I spotted among other people on the other side of the hall. I had met him some months before at the salsa class in Pleasance that I attended at the beginning of my fieldwork. He came and said ‘Let’s dance. It’s your favourite song’. As we were dancing we were also singing the lyrics of the song. Afterwards, some bands played instrumental music, other musicians sang. Adults sang and danced along with their children. Later, Mercedes and some of her Peruvian friends danced Peruvian folk dances. There was face painting for children and various games had been organised. The atmosphere was very loud. I could hear people laughing and enjoying the party.



Figure 4.1 [Photographs taken by Mercedes Cohen] during The *Fiestas Patrias Peruanas* – celebration of Peru's independence.

I then danced with Maria and Laura, as more salsa music was played. We returned to the table. When Latin Americans meet with each other as Latin Americans, one can see that the community is indexed in the physical closeness, which, in their experience of Edinburgh, is absent outside – as I was told on various occasions during my fieldwork.

It is important for many Latin Americans to connect with others, be it Latin Americans or non-Latin Americans, beyond the spoken language. For many Latin Americans it is vital to interact with people with whom they have an established emotional link in nearly everyday interactions (López 2010). At the *fiestas patrias* event I attended, I

could hear people laughing and enjoying the time that they all spent together. I saw people kissing or hugging when greeting each other. Some men nodded their head up and down instead of saying hello to other male friends verbally. Many Latin Americans who came to the party concentrated, when communicating with one another, on non-verbal communication signals, such as “facial expressions, hand and body movement, physical touch, voice pitch, voice sounds (not the articulation of the words)” (López 2010) in order to convey their emotions. Physical connection is important for them. Hugs, kisses, hand gesticulation and touching are commonly used during everyday communications (López 2010). It is common for Latin American men to kiss women when greeting them, no matter whether they know each other well or not. Latin American women who are friends kiss each other on the cheek to greet each other. Some Latin American men and women also touch or grasp other’s arms when speaking (López 2010; Cruz 2001: 53). Some men also put their hand on their friend’s shoulder (Cruz 2001: 53). Some men give hugs to each other to show their friendliness (López 2010). Some Latin American men also bob their head up and down to say hello to another male (Cruz 2001: 53). These are all “culture-specific expectations for the tactile relations between categories of people such as men and women” (Finnegan 2005: 18). It is essential to comprehend what are the key rules of interaction within the Latin American community, after Finnegan (2005: 19). As such, “touch is effective for marking particular relationships” (ibid.: 19). Following along these lines, Classen (2005: 1) suggests that touch is not only “a private act”. It is also important for demonstrating, experiencing and arguing about one’s “social values and hierarchies” (ibid.: 1). Touch “represents a confirmation of our boundaries and separateness while permitting a union or connection with others that transcends physical limits” (Thayer 1982: 298 cited in Finnegan 2005: 18). For instance, the particular way of kissing and the place where it happens gives a message about the relationship of those involved in the kiss and their individual reaction, whether they approve or refuse “each others’ claims” (Finnegan 2005: 20). There is however a difference between, for instance, Latin American and Scottish boundaries as some Latin Americans experienced. A Colombian friend of mine told me:

And after having worked in this company for 3 years... It was my colleague’s birthday and so I gave her a gift. I approached her and wished her happy birthday. I gave her a

hug and a kiss but she moved quickly backwards. I thought that after knowing each other for 3 years I could do this but I was wrong.

Amelia was astonished about her colleague's reaction. She thought that by giving her a hug and a kiss she would emphasise that they were not complete strangers. It is in human nature to have sensorial life experiences that comprise of the use of various senses. Emotions and moods are the affective experiences (Rojas 2015). Evaluative experiences are based on how one's life is when one looks at evaluative standards and aspirations (ibid.). Amelia realised that there are huge differences in conventions of physical distance between Latin Americans and Scottish people. She realised with Carolina, through contact with non-Latin Americans and other Latin Americans in Edinburgh, how important sensory life experiences are for their sense of 'Latin American-ness' and how challenging cross-cultural communication can be. The Latin American 'sensorium' transcends national boundaries.

Consociation

Carolina speaks with her sisters on Skype and chats on Facebook, but 'it is not the same as you cannot touch or hug another person. And also, the time difference does not help. If you are sad here, let's say at 9am, you have to wait 7 hours until the other person wakes up. I miss my sisters, in a way I try to compensate this absence with my friendships here', she told me. Carolina also said that she adapts very well to new environments that she encounters by accepting life as it is. Nevertheless, it is very difficult for her to be far away from her family, as her family bonds are very close and family plays an important role in her life. When she heard that Carlos organised a signing group, she liked this idea very much and started participating. 'But I did not extend much my social circle. My social circle of Latin Americans is small. I am not very sociable, let's say', she said.

There are people who experience a feeling of a collective fellowship, of communality by means of limited consociation in everyday life – whether at work, school, as neighbours or when carrying out leisure activities (Amit and Rapport 2002: 4, 58-9).

During these encounters, people may associate known faces with particular names, and share experiences together; therefore, they can create a feeling of ‘contextual fellowship’ (ibid: 5). However, these types of consociation are not permanent. They rely on specific contexts and activities. Those “relationships of community may be relatively narrowly circumscribed in time and space and decidedly partial or situational in context, and yet highly salient as means of affiliation” (Dyck 2002: 107). Those types of consociations are often not “marked with strong symbolic markers of categorical identity” (Amit and Rapport 2002: 5). The relationships Carolina built during the singing group reunions occurred in a specific context of consociation. Her relationships with some friends she made there extended to other settings. She started meeting with some people outside the singing group reunions. Also, after she stopped attending the group completely, she remained in personal relationships with some of the friends she made. The ‘Latin America sings in Edinburgh’ group is based on the shared interest of singing Latin American songs in Spanish, however the group is also based on ‘symbolic markers’ of Latin American identity⁵¹, and the above-described Latin American “dynamics”.

Relationships created during some forms of consociation can be extended to other situations when the contact occurs, or the relationships can even move away from the initial connection in which they were shaped (Amit and Rapport 2002: 59). Thus, the relationship can transform from being based mainly on “consociate membership in a collectivity to a more dyadic link within a personal network” (ibid.: 60). However, often these relationships are dependent on sustained involvement in activities or associations where they were made, as these types of community are primarily based on what members have in common than on the antonymous categories amongst insiders and outsiders (ibid.: 59). In Carolina’s case, with some people from the singing group she stopped being in contact once she had left the group, as she did not share anything in common with them anymore.

Carolina, before coming to do her PhD in Edinburgh, sold her flat along with all the furniture and all other objects she had in the flat, apart from her books, which she

⁵¹ Such as, for instance, shared history of oppression, food, music, dance, solidarity and sociality. More on the symbolic markers of identity in Chapter 3, on ‘Collective system of representation; Manuel’s personal boundaries’.

moved to her parents' house. She has been anchored to her country of origin – Mexico – mainly because of the links with her parents and friends who lived there. Carolina compensates the absence of the members of her family, relatives and friends with the friendships that she has established in Edinburgh within the Latin American 'community', with her Scottish husband, his family and with some Scottish friends she met while being a member of a fitness club. Especially after both of her parents died, she needed contact with 'my Latin American community', she emphasised. What she meant by this is attending the singing group and various events of the Peruvian 'community', organised by Mercedes. In the singing group, Carolina felt good. When mourning the death of her parents, she said that it was a good moment for her to attend the group, as singing in Spanish and having physical contact with other Latin Americans was an important support for her and made her feel relief from all the stresses she was going through at that time.

Carolina built social relationships in the singing group, has found a sense of belonging in the Latin American 'community' and also formed personal links with her Latin American friends. The Latin American 'community', of which Carolina identified herself as a member when attending the singing group, is – drawing on Amit and Rapport (2002: 59-60)

conceptualized first and foremost by reference to what is held in common by members rather than in terms of oppositional categories between members and outsiders [...] such consociation and the identities deriving from it are built up through the shared experiences of participation in particular associations and events. What matters most, therefore, is what 'we' have shared, not the boundary dividing 'us' from 'them'.

Her social relationships in the group, as well as her personal links, were formed among people she met. On the other hand, belonging to the Latin American 'community', she claims, is built more on 'symbolic makers' (Amit and Rapport 2002: 60), not on particular networks or places. Although specific networks of relationships enforce the sense of belonging to the Latin American 'community'.

Bromas and chistes

It is past 7pm on Friday evening and I call Diana to ask whether she wants to go with me to a salsa party in Teviot. She says that some of her friends decided to visit her tonight and asks whether I want to join them. ‘Why not? Thanks’, I tell her. In an hour’s time I am on my way to the shore area of Leith, where Diana lives. Apart from a few non-Latin Americans, including me, Diana’s friend’s husband and Diana’s flatmate and the flatmate’s partner, most people who come are from different Latin American countries. At some point, there is a discussion about the differences in the meanings of some words throughout different Latin American countries, such as *fresa*. In Mexico, this means strawberry. But in Argentina strawberry is *frutilla*. Diana, together with Carolina, decides to play some games. We play charades. Then someone comes up with the idea of making *bromas* [practical jokes] to those who arrive late to the party. We are all sitting in a circle. Carolina explains what the game is about and so we wait for someone to come. It is Stefan. He arrives late, as he was at work. Each person gives the name of a body part. Everybody except Stefan knows that, after giving the name of a body part, later on the person on the right will have to kiss the person on the left on the mentioned body part. Later on, other people arrive and so we repeat the *broma*. People laugh a lot when those arriving late mention bottom or breasts, for instance, and then have to kiss the person next to him or her on that body part.

Whenever I met with Latin Americans, people always used to tell *chistes* [spoken jokes] and make *bromas* to others. Jokes originate in oral traditions throughout the world and provoke humour by use of word play, irony, sarcasm and intriguing juxtapositions. They can consist of a couple of words, or be in the form of a story, usually finishing with a punch line emphasising the humour’s purpose (Morales 2012: 632). The common notion for a narrative joke in Spanish is *chiste*. Some regions have different terms to distinguish between specific types of jokes. For instance *talla*, which is widely used by Chicanos in Texas, means a humorous situation that has apparently occurred to the speaker or a good friend of the speaker (Morales 2012: 632). Jokes are an element of “a performative routine” using language, social status, knowledge or general experiences known to both the performer and audience. Jokes can be a tolerable way for

conveying deep-rooted fears, resentments, and worries (ibid.: 632). For Latinos in the USA, jokes are frequently a means for communicating matters that occur due to “navigating both their ancestral culture and American culture” (ibid.: 632). As a result, in order to understand many *chistes* told in the USA, thus “the verbal word play that presents itself in the form of translation puns and bilingual humour”, one has to be familiar with both cultures and languages (ibid.: 632). Latin Americans in Edinburgh like playing with the English and Spanish languages, but also when acknowledging the difference in meaning of some words in Spanish throughout different Latin American countries. For instance, the word *coger* which – in Spain – means to grab/take (for instance, a bus), in Mexico and Argentina means to have sexual relations.

Some jokes are in-group jokes that use culture-related symbols or words common for the ethnic or social group of the performer, as well as the audience. This type of joke is frequently self-satirical or self-critical and can be used to reiterate a sense of belonging in a culture by referring to elements of a common cultural identity. For instance, “You know you’re Latino if... you light a candle for the Virgin Mary on the night before a big test” or “You know you’re Mexican if...you eat rice and beans with a corn tortilla instead of a fork” (Morales 2012: 633). The first *chiste* can be understood by most Latinos as it refers to a known Catholic custom present in various Latin American countries. The latter *chiste* requires a particular knowledge of Mexican culture, here with a popular type of eating (ibid.: 633). The other *chistes* are the out-group jokes that involve mockery of an outside ethnic or social group, normally by using their shortcomings. For instance, “*Sabes por qué a America le dicen la ley? Por que los violan a cada pinche rato.*” This *chiste* levels the Spanish word for the law, *la ley*, with the slang notion for sex, *lay*. It would be translated into English “Do you know why people refer to America as *la ley*? Because it violates them all the fucking time” (ibid.: 633). This joke is a sarcastic comment on the “excess of liberties” America has permitted its citizens. This *chiste* is also an example of how word play can restrict the receiving audience to just those who know both languages well. Latinos use *chistes* in the USA to emphasise in a light-hearted way the matters they have to deal with, such as acculturation, assimilation, stereotypes, and immigration, and also border patrol (Morales 2012: 633).

Latin Americans in Edinburgh use both in-group and out-group jokes. It is part of their 'way of being', as Maria told me. Latin Americans often tell funny stories that happened to them and their family members in Latin America. Jokes also help them to deal with difficult and embarrassing situations while living in Edinburgh. Through jokes, they comment a lot on their contact with British people. Ana, who worked in a coffee shop, told me how she kept commenting on how lovely one of the frequent customer's perfumes smelled – until one of her co-workers told her that that customer might not feel comfortable with the comments and might think that she 'fancies him'. She got very embarrassed as she only liked the perfume and did not want to show signs of anything else. It was an older man, and later on Ana apologised and explained what she meant. Since then she has never commented or talked too much with her customers.

Many Latin Americans I spoke with used more frequently the term *broma* instead of *chiste*. *Bromas* include practical jokes that are popular among Latin Americans, like the one at Diana's party. They are part of 'Latin American dynamics'. Maria commented on how, at one of the birthday parties she attended, the fiancé of a girl who had a birthday party made a *broma*. At the time when everyone was waiting for a birthday cake, he brought a box inside which everybody thought was the cake and dropped it on the floor. Everyone then shouted: 'oh no', including the birthday girl, who got very worried as she thought the cake was damaged. What occurred was that the box was empty and that he only made a practical joke.

Internet

Non-verbal communication of Latin Americans is also effective in social media, such as on Facebook and MySpace. Latin Americans can network there by use of non-text communication, such as emoticons as well as

photographs, music, recorded voice, video, [...] digital gifts [...] group affiliations, games, links, and hundreds of add-on applications that often reveal the more personal or emotional side of the user.

(López 2010)

Many Latin Americans in Edinburgh use Facebook a lot, and the above-mentioned non-text means of communication. People in different parts of the world use the Internet and electronic media in manifold ways. Internet and social media allow one to become part of a group, but also enable ‘electronic individualism’ (Howes and Classen 2014: 90) where Latin Americans, by use of the mentioned non-text communication, can show their distinctiveness. Notwithstanding, Latin American face-to-face communication, after Howes and Classen (2014: 91), is multisensory and involves sight, touch, smell and hearing that happens “in the physical presence of the speaker”. It is an embodied communication that Latin Americans favour, thus electronic communications that are “for the most part disembodied visual fragments, which do not carry the impact of the physical presence of their senders and can be left unseen and unattended” (ibid.: 91), do not allow for the ‘Latin American dynamics’ that is very emotionally and sensory saturated.

Latin Americans in Edinburgh, after being exposed to cross-cultural communication with Scottish people and with people from other non-Latin American countries, become more aware of the differences – not only in verbal behaviour but also in non-verbal communication.

It takes at least two somethings to create a difference [...] two entities (real or imagined) such that the difference between them can be immanent in their mutual relationship; and the whole affair must be such that news of their difference can be represented as a difference inside some information-processing entity, such as a brain or, perhaps, a computer. There is a profound and unanswerable question about the nature of those ‘at least two’ things that between them generate the difference which becomes information by making a difference. Clearly each alone is - for the mind and perception - a non-entity, a non-being. Not different from being, and not different from non-being. An unknowable, a Ding an sich, a sound of one hand clapping.

(Bateson 1979: 78)

Information about the ‘self’ surfaces in relationships to ‘others’. Latin Americans create knowledge about them and their understanding of who they are in relation to the ‘other’. As some Latin Americans told me, they became aware after they moved to Edinburgh that it is not only the difference in communication through language, but also on a non-verbal level. As I mentioned before, some Latin Americans observed that even though Spaniards also speak Spanish, they do not have the ‘Latin American dynamics’ described in this section. They vary in their ‘ways of being’.

Latin Americans in Edinburgh strengthen their sense of ‘Latin American-ness’ by realising how differently people from non-Latin American countries behave, even though there are differences in non-verbal behaviours in different Latin American countries, based on one’s “age, gender, geographical region, race, socioeconomic status, and personality” (Cruz 2001: 52). As Lewis (2004: 269) claims, identity can be “found in scales of difference”. Difference is crucial “to the dynamics of a vital milieu, but such differences can become *too* different”. Latin Americans who immigrated to the UK have been exposed to so many different ways of being and thinking of other people from different nationalities that also live in Edinburgh. When they met other Latin Americans they changed focus from the differences that they knew, or were told by nation-state builders, existed between them when they lived in Latin America – and acknowledged similarities between them. As Lewis (2004) argues: “what people require of (or assume arises from) an ‘identity’ is a level of anchoring, of resolution - of rootedness”. Hannerz (1990: 237) observed that we are living in a “world of culture”, which can be characterised by “an organization of diversity rather than a replication of uniformity”. In response to global communication and movement, and the evident move towards cultural homogeneity, there has been a concurrent surge observed in “conscious differentiation of nationalisms and localisms” (Lewis 2004: 270-1). As a result, as she further claims, it might be possible that one will find ‘identity’ only in “those yet smaller ‘communities of interest’” through sharing “ancient language, in dance, in family” that are a means for people to seek their “rootedness” (ibid.: 271). The Latin American community is an embodied community. Its members, through various types of consociations where there is a space for the Latin American ‘dynamics’, can find in the community a source of security. Through it, they can create their senses of belonging while living abroad in the quickly changing world.

Negative ‘Latin American dynamics’

The ‘dynamics’ can be good ones, however they can also transform into bad ones’, Carolina told me. She observed that in the same singing group where she initially loved spending time, ‘Latin American dynamics’ that she did not like also occurred.

As I told you every culture has its good and bad things, so the problems that I had with my group of colleagues at work in Mexico I saw as if they were reproduced in that small social group. I think it is to do with the history of every country. [...] So I think that there are cultural elements of competition and jealousy. [...] In the case of all immigrants, we all came with our 'cultural baggage'. We were brought up in Latin America, or you in Poland. You emigrate being an adult – when you are already, let's say, structured. You bring with yourself a series of elements.

Carolina stopped attending the aforementioned singing group and went to sing in a Scottish choir in English, being the only Mexican. She avoids contact with other Mexicans because there is an issue of jealousy, and she thinks this is a problem, which causes Latin America and Mexico to not move forward.

Jealousy is for Carolina something that she believes one brings as a 'cultural baggage', wherever one goes. 'Jealousy is human and I saw it among Scottish people too', Carolina said. She is of the opinion that jealousy is one of the human emotions featured in all cultural groups. However, she believes that it is culturally constructed and so what jealousy means for her might be different for her Scottish friends. Some Latin Americans told me that there is lots of envy and jealousy among many Latin Americans in Edinburgh. As analytical categories, to draw on Sanders (2010: 29), "envy [...] is rooted in social comparison, jealousy is based on personal rivalry and fear of loss". Carolina said that it is important when being part of any group to find a way of meeting the group's objectives, without jealousy, and to focus on a common interest between its members. Her perception was that some members of the singing group were jealous of losing power, of not being able to decide for the whole group. Others did not want other people in the group to be in charge of the group and make decisions, even though they personally did not want to become leaders of the group. I have heard some Latin Americans talking about the jealousy as far as the relations with one's partner are concerned, or when copying the power relations that exist between various Latin American countries. Some others talked about the envy that is also present among some Latin Americans in Edinburgh. As I was told, some Latin Americans are particularly envious of other Latin Americans when they earn more money, have a better job, a nicer flat or speak better English.

McIlwaine (2007: 31-2), in her research on 'Living in Latin London: How Latin American Migrants Survive in the City', wrote on the presence of envy ['*envidia*'] and lots of mistrust among Latin American migrants in London. Her respondents were afraid that some people would be more successful in their jobs, earn more money and obtain legal status. Some of her respondents claimed that it was related to undocumented migrants being afraid of being reported to the authorities. Other people explained that their lack of trust developed frequently at their workplace and in connection with money. Competition was mentioned among Latin Americans in London, as well as situations when supervisors from the same Latin American country as the employee were exploiting them due to their illegal status. As such, many people become cautious when in contact with other Latin Americans. According to McIlwaine (2007: 33), the mistrust in the Latin American community in London is not related to national identities, but to the migrant experience. As the author emphasised, many Latin Americans talked that, irrespective of financial or political problems when they lived in their countries of origin, they remained in close connection with their family and interacted a lot with their friends.

Some Peruvian women I spoke to did not discuss issues of envy but talked about '*mal de ojo*' ['the evil eye']. It happened to their babies that cried constantly and were not feeding well. They knew that someone must have glanced at their baby in an envious way, and that is how they got '*mal de ojo*'. Many mothers are afraid that "others will envy her good fortune in having a child" (Baer and Bustillo 1993: 92). When children have *mal de ojo* they can feel feverish, have diarrhoea and cry constantly (ibid.: 92). *Mal de ojo* happens when "a person experiencing envy or jealousy unintentionally or (as is more often the case) deliberately gazes upon another person. Jealousy, envy, anger, resentment, or illegitimate desires ignite a potential for *mal de ojo*" (Sanabria 2007: 230). Laura's mother sent her grandchildren bracelets with Huayruro seed that can protect them from *mal de ojo*. When she has a feeling that one of her children suffers from *mal de ojo* she *pasa el huevo* 'passes an egg'. She does it when her Scottish husband is not present, as he does not support what she is doing. He thinks it is a superstitious practice that does not work. *Pasar el huevo* involves passing a room temperature egg over the ill person's body. After having passed an egg over her child's body Laura cracks the egg and transfers it to a glass of water to see whether there are

any spots on an egg or blood marks. By examining the egg she knows whether the child had *mal de ojo*. What Laura calls *pasar el huevo* was observed by Baer and Bustillo (1993: 96) among the Mexican Florida farmworkers and was called *barre con un blanquillo* and, as they said, it helps to cure *mal de ojo*.

The described concepts of jealousy, envy and *mal de ojo* are very often culturally determined, and they inform the social interaction of Latin Americans. However, social interaction also informs the way Latin Americans behave and think. When Latin Americans moved to Edinburgh they were exposed to different ‘cultures’ and different ‘ways of being’. Some Latin Americans, after having arrived in Edinburgh, transformed their cultural identity into a hybrid Latin American identity, taking on some new elements and rejecting others. “Hybridity” is the “‘Third Space’” (Bhabha 1990: 212). Latin American identity goes through, what Bhabha (1990: 252) calls, a “process of translating and transvaluing cultural differences”. It is an identity “in process” (Hall 1996: 2) experienced differently by various individuals”.

Latin American stereotypes in the USA and in the UK

Victor, originally from Mexico, lived in Sweden before he came to the UK. He told me that over there, he felt more ‘Latin American’ than ‘Mexican’:

I felt more identified with the idea of Latin American, to be Latin American more than to be Mexican. Over there people recognise us by way of what it’s like to be “Latino” [...] and perhaps it was slightly...there is a stereotype of how “Latin” people are. I don’t fit a little in these stereotypes that we are happy, that we talk a lot, are expressive and all this. But as people misunderstood me in Sweden and believed that I was like this; well, so I was behaving like this. [...] Really, if we talk about identity I feel like a PhD student and this is my identity now. I don’t like doing things other than university, Victor said.

Victor is aware of the commonly accepted stereotypes of what it means ‘to be Latin American’ in the minds of non-Latin Americans and told me about the expectations of people he had met as far as his behaviour. For those people who have not been interested in knowing him as a person and who have copied the existing stereotypes on Latin Americans, Victor ‘acted’ the way they wanted to see him. He emphasised during our conversation that there is no point making an effort and constantly explaining and

trying to prove to people that ‘he is different’ to what they believe he is. He tried to disabuse people initially of their ideas around ‘what it means to be Latin American’. However, he got tired of it and now he does not do it anymore. His friends know what person he really is. People from various Latin American and Caribbean countries in Edinburgh are constructed differently, by both Latin Americans and non-Latin Americans. In this section I am looking at various ‘stereotypes’ and their functions, in relation to Latin Americans – present in the minds of some of the USA and British citizens, as well as by the Latin Americans in Edinburgh themselves.

Stereotypes can be partially true, however they also cover major generalisations or obliviousness of the diversity among and within different groups (Gregory 1994: 201). They are a “relatively rigid and oversimplified conception of a group of people, in which all individuals in the given group are labelled with the so-called group characteristics” (Wrightsmann and Deaux 1981: 72). In the USA, many people associate ‘Latinos’ with illegal immigration, with those who do not pay taxes and rely on social services, with poverty and with those who send all of their money to their home countries. This term is also associated with those who bring crime, are drug smugglers or dealers as well as those who have low skilled jobs⁵². Especially in USA film productions, males are often depicted as gardeners and females as maids (Barreto et al. 2012). Many people think of ‘Latinos’ as those who refuse to speak English and as those who do not go to college (Regalado 2013). Chavez, in ‘The Latino threat narrative’, contests some other myths about ‘Latinos’ – myths existing among those who are against Latin American immigration to the USA. ‘Latinos’ are stereotyped as incapable or reluctant to integrate into the social and ‘cultural’ life of the United States (Chavez 2013: 209). ‘Latinos’ are seen as those who detach themselves from the larger society, replicating ‘Latino’ ‘cultural’ beliefs and pathological behaviours such as high fertility levels (ibid.: 209). Other stereotypes perceive Latin American women either as ‘hot sexy Latina[s]’, as religious ‘self-sacrificing, passive mother[s]’ or as ‘pregnant adolescents’ (Arellano & Ayalla-Alcantar 2004; Greenberg & Mastro 2008, Merskin 2007; Nieman 2004 in Romero et al. 2011: 166).

The stereotypical images of ‘Latinos’ have been created and are being reproduced by

⁵² Like Donald Trump now.

politicians and many opinion leaders in the USA who present their views speaking in public and in writing on their websites and blogs. Also, mass media (television, cinema, newspapers and magazines) contribute to the construction and reproduction of stereotypical images (Menéndez Alarcón 2014: 72-73). Stereotypes were initially used by journalists as a means of “mechanical reproduction” of the same material by allocating to the subject a fixed meaning in order not to have to repeat oneself in future journalistic work on the same subject and have a base for further work (Enteman 2011: 20). However, stereotypes changed their meaning, and in the most common use “stereotypes are ultimately used to stigmatize” (ibid.: 20). Timberlake and Williams (2012) demonstrated in their study that opinions on some groups of immigrants are related to national discourse. Stereotypes of Latin American immigrants were linked with evaluation of the problem of unauthorised immigration in an anti-immigration political debate enforced by media coverage and by various anti-immigration groups, which focus on unauthorised Mexican immigrants or on Latin Americans in general as the reason for the immigration ‘problems’. Subsequently, the study revealed that it all had a relatively strong impact on influencing individuals’ opinions, even in the Ohio state where there are not many Latin American immigrants (Timberlake and Williams 2012: 886-888).

In the UK, British people have stereotyped many Latin Americans as cleaners and as those who were not able to do other jobs, and so frequently they were not given a chance to change employment into, for instance, an office job (McIlwaine, Cock and Linneker 2011: 120). It took a Colombian friend of mine a couple of years to stop working in Edinburgh as a cleaner and to find a job in her field – as a draughtswoman. When leaving the hotel she worked for and giving her reason for doing so, her employer laughed at her and could not believe that it was possible for her to find such a skilled job, probably assuming that she was only capable of doing low-skilled jobs. Latin Americans are stereotyped by many as carrying out low-skilled work and are not being considered as holding various types of expertise. For instance, Victor, who is a professional musician and a music teacher originally from Chile, living in Edinburgh, told me that no one in Edinburgh or in the UK has ever wanted to listen to his opinion on classical music or treated it seriously.

Classical music. Because I'm 'Latino' they will not listen to me. This happens here. They can listen to a German, or a British person. When I go....[they do not listen]. There exists this daily fight [struggle] of "Latino" people. Why do we do this thing in this way and not the other... Sometimes it is genetic; people do not think, they just act. There are many things...the arrogance of European some people, not of all of them: 'This is the only way of doing something', [they believe]. But there are many ways of doing it, Victor said.

Another stereotype is that British people frequently presume that Latin Americans do not speak English well (McIlwaine, Cock and Linneker 2011: 120); and there are many Latin Americans in Edinburgh from different walks of life that are fluent in English.

Many Colombians and also Ecuadorians are concerned because of a stereotype present, assuming that they all smuggle, grow or sell drugs. This stereotype has been identified even by the second generation of Colombians and Ecuadorians in the UK (McIlwaine, Cock and Linneker 2011: 120). Whenever Colombians I spoke to in Edinburgh introduce themselves and say where they are from, the first thing they hear is: "Colombia? ...cocaine". This is a stereotype of the countries that produce drugs.

During my fieldwork in Edinburgh the members of the Latin American 'community' told me that sexual stereotypes are also present. Some Latin American women in Edinburgh told me that many British people they met believe that most Latin American women look like contestants of the Miss World Beauty Contest, that they are all tall, slim and sexy. Therefore, when some British people meet Latin American women in Edinburgh who do not look the way they imagined them to be, they are very surprised that they are from Latin America. Latin American men are also stereotyped as seductive, as those who like meeting new women and as those who are not very faithful when being in relationships. Due to the present stereotypes, some male members of the Latin American 'community' in Edinburgh told me that when they were interested in a Scottish woman, or a woman from any other European country, they had to make much more effort to show that they were seriously interested in dating her and prove that they were not 'playing with her'.

The other common stereotype, and also a clash of expectations, related to both sexes is that it is presumed that all Latin Americans dance very well; especially salsa. I went to a

salsa party and a Colombian friend of mine was asked to dance by a Scottish guy and it occurred that they could not dance together as she had never attended any dance classes. She dances the way she feels the music, using her own steps. On the contrary, one could see that he attended salsa classes and so danced in a completely different way, a very mechanical way. Their dance together did not work out well. Most of the people who attend salsa classes are of the opinion that it is them who know how to dance salsa and if there is someone dancing ‘differently’, then they are not prepared for that as they cannot reproduce the steps they have learned during the class. They assume that there is something wrong with the person they dance with. After that dance, a friend of mine danced with her Colombian friend and they both danced together perfectly, enjoying the party without stressing themselves about the expectations of how one should dance.

Another stereotype, and simply a lack of knowledge, perceives Latin Americans as poor and usually of either mixed race or indigenous heritage. Some people I met during my fieldwork from, for instance, Chile, Argentina and Venezuela told me that British people, when meeting them are surprised when they are told that they are from one of the mentioned countries. Sometimes people do not know where the country one is from is located, so those people I spoke with use the term ‘Latin America’ to help people to locate where they are from. Even though people look with a surprise if the person with ‘white skin’ says he or she is from ‘Latin America’, and they say: “Latin America? You do not look Latin American”. The question arises then, ‘what do Latin Americans look like?’ As aforementioned, it is a term that should be detached from one’s physiognomy. Stereotypes are one of the elements of individuals’ world-views and are the mental shortcuts for one’s perception and cognition of the world. Through them one can “rationalise ‘prejudicial’, pre-judgemental cognitions and conclusions about the world” (Rapport and Overing 2000: 344). There are, for instance, stereotypes where people associate countries with particular ‘cultural’ events. For example, Brazil may be associated with the carnival. Stereotypes may also emerge based on certain tourist attractions, such as Peru with Machu Picchu. Or we may consider how both Peru and Ecuador are stereotypically associated with street musicians in Europe. The same may happen with a particular politician – for example, Venezuela with Hugo Chavez.

Latin American stereotypes among Latin Americans themselves

The present stereotypes are reinforced in fiction books and movies, as well as by Latin Americans who themselves use some of those stereotypes when referring to other Latin Americans. For instance, between some Chileans and Peruvians, Ecuadorians and Peruvians, there have remained some tensions – especially between older generations who bring the stereotypes that existed or still exist in their home countries related to armed conflicts between Chile and Peru, between Ecuador and Peru, but also due to the racism and classism present in those countries. That is in Chile there are many Peruvian immigrants who work in low-skilled jobs and are not treated with respect by some Chileans. So when some Latin Americans meet people from one of the mentioned countries, they are reluctant to speak with that person. These are generational differences. Younger generations, as Manuel from Ecuador told me, “try to see each other like friends. But there are problems of nationalism and of these types of things. But this is among elderly people, not the new generations. We are not interested in wars”.

A Mexican friend of mine who was introduced at a party to a Guatemalan girl recalled a situation that is another prime example of a stereotype based on power relations. Said girl, from the first moment she was informed that my friend, Estefania, is from Mexico, started telling her that some of her family members live in Europe and later on told her, “You Mexicans want to colonise everyone” [she meant especially Guatemala, her country]. What is more, my Mexican friend’s husband is bilingual. His mother is Scottish and his father is Mexican, and as such he is a native speaker in both languages. Some people they have both met from the Latin American ‘community’ in Edinburgh who did not know he was bilingual and had spoken with him in Spanish, when they heard him speaking English they were surprised and looked strangely at him thinking, “How can a Mexican native speaker speak English so fluently?”.

Due to the stereotypes present among some members of the Latin American ‘community’ in Edinburgh who visualise other Latin Americans as those who do not speak English, as those who struggle financially and have problems finding

employment, or work in a low-skilled profession, some Latin Americans, when they meet people who are not as they assumed based on stereotypes, or who are in a better situation than them, become envious. Carolina from Mexico, during our conversation illustrated the above situation with a story of crabs that were in two containers. In one there were Japanese crabs and when they noticed that one of them climbed and wanted to leave the container, they pushed him to help him leave the container. On the contrary, in the other container where there were Mexican crabs, when they noticed that one of them was getting close to being successful in escaping they pulled him/her down. This was a metaphor that depicts situations of when some Latin Americans become envious and do not wish other Latin Americans well when they have better established lives in Edinburgh and managed to find employment in the area in which they are educated, have a nice flat and are generally happy. Such situations obviously also happen among other communities and in general most of the Latin American people I spoke with help each other out. However, there are those who are envious and see things through the pejorative ‘stereotypes’. Such situations made some members of the Latin American ‘community’ reduce the number of Latin American friends in their social circles.

Many people respond to ‘stereotypes’ with irony. For instance, Manuel told me that Latin American migrants sometimes define themselves as ‘Sudacas’. This term is used in Latin America and in Spain to refer in a derogative and insulting way to people from South America. The use of it has spread and it is used by many Spanish people to refer to all Latin American immigrants. As such, most people I spoke with would be offended to be referred to as a ‘Sudaca’. However, there are those who take that ‘stereotypical’ term out of its context and use it ironically to describe themselves.

As migrants, we define ourselves sometimes as ‘Sudacas’, which sometimes is an insult, sometimes not. ‘Sudaca’ is used all over Latin America, from Mexico to Chile. ‘Sudaca’ is a kind of nickname for South Americans, but also is a kind of insult because ‘Sudacas’ are the people who try to cross the border through the States, and ‘Sudaca’ is because you sweat a lot trying to cross the desert, so your back is always wet. So you are always sweating. So we like to say we are ‘Sudacas’.

Irony is a “cognitive detachment or displacement” (Rapport 2003: 42). It is a ‘universal capacity and cognitive resort’ (ibid.: 44). Irony allows Manuel, above, to step aside, to see and oppose ‘ascribed categories’. Manuel is able to question ‘stereotypes’ used by others and give them his own meaning when shaping his world. Human beings “can

everywhere appreciate the malleability and the mutability of social rules and realities, and the contingency and ambiguity of cultural truths” (Rapport 2003: 43). Manuel plays with various ‘categories’ and stereotypes that he uses to describe himself, such as ‘Sudaca’.

Some others use the ‘stereotypes’ for their own interest and are able to actively shape them. There is a group of street musicians originally from Peru playing “Andean music”, mixed with “European tunes”. Whenever they play on the street, they wear a “typical clothing”. However, this is not Peruvian clothing but the outfit that some North America Indians wore – for example, feather war bonnets. I was invited once to one of the band members’ flat and I noticed the feathered war bonnet and asked about it. He told me that he brought it to the UK especially to ‘perform’ and does not use it apart from for that purpose. When they wear this – as many people think – ‘traditional’ outfit he told me that they earn more money and sell more CDs. As can be seen, the members of the Latin American ‘community’ position themselves sometimes utilising the ‘stereotypes’ of what people think – in this case, what ‘Indigenous people’ look like. That leads to a situation where people copy and reinforce the existing ‘stereotypes’ and then more people start believing in them. I found an article with photographs on one of the former Scottish MPs’ websites⁵³, depicting his account of a meeting with the musicians. It is stated that they were all dressed in ‘traditional native South American outfits’ (Walker 2012).

On the contrary, there are also ‘stereotypes’ present in the minds of people who have never been to Europe. There are people in Latin America who want to listen to music from the USA or Europe and buy foreign products, such as Coca Cola. Some others, as Victor from Chile commented, pretend to be Europeans because “they do not know that here on this continent not everything is flowers, gold...the same problems, or even worse ones that exist on our continent also exist here. This you learn on the street”. As such, people before migrating have certain expectations – imaginations towards the people who live in the place that they go to.

⁵³ Walker, B. (2012) available online at: billwalkerdunfermline.com/2012/02/27/peruvian-musicians-impromptu-musical-session-with-dunfermline-snp/.

Also, people who live in Edinburgh – in the case of my fieldwork – have certain expectations and imaginations towards Latin American immigrants who enter ‘their space’. By use of ‘stereotypes’, both Latin Americans who come to Edinburgh and those non-Latin Americans who live in Edinburgh can explain to themselves who is the ‘other’, with whom they interact as neighbours, colleagues at work, as parents of their children’s friends from school or as members of the same sports club; but foremost, who they themselves are. Through the use of “stereotypical images of difference”, individuals and groups can maintain and strengthen their senses of belonging. Stereotypes are thus not always used towards outside individual or group boundaries; very often they are directed inwards “into the group and, even more so, into the individual, furnishing him or her with comforting shibboleths of self” (Rapport and Overing 2000: 346). People have certain preconceptions of how the ‘other’ is and behaves, and this makes them feel secure, as they think they know how to interact with the ‘other’. Stereotypes thus have different functions. Depending on the context, they can be used to stigmatise the ‘other’, to position the ‘other’ in one’s world order and as a part of creation and re-creation of one’s self.

As Vilma Santiago-Irizarry (2001: 115) observed in her study on ‘Medicalizing Ethnicity: The Construction of Latino identity in a Psychiatric Setting’, in the USA, some staff from the Latino bi-lingual and bi-cultural psychiatric programmes “were reproducing the marginal position of Latino culture in U.S. society and contributing to its further subjugation, rather than revaluing and empowering it” (ibid.: 150). The author further noted that the “reproduction of a medical ideology that systematized cultural traits and behaviors associated with being Latino into an array of psychologized symptoms resulted in the construction of a stereotypical Latino patient by Latino health practitioners” (Santiago-Irizarry 2001: 115). Latinos were said to be, for instance, emotional (ibid.: 137), warm, caring and considerate towards others when interacting (ibid.: 21, 113). What Santiago-Irizarry (2001) observed is that ethnicity has been integrated into medical discourse and practices, making it an integral component of patients’ diagnosis and treatment. Cultural and linguistic differences between the dominant Anglo culture and the Latino have been emphasised, and the sociocultural and historic specificities of each of the groups and their historic relations omitted (ibid.: 2).

From Santiago-Irizarry's research (2001), one can see how in bi-lingual, bi-cultural psychiatric programmes in New York City, different immigrants from different Latin American countries "can be essentialized and stereotyped in relation to "Latino" culture" (Stephen 2008: 428). The existence of Latin American stereotypes affects the Latin Americans' own representations. However, individuals – when shaping their 'identity' – are also influenced by how they are represented by 'others', and how they feel about it. 'Others' are the non-Latin Americans but also 'other' Latin Americans, who themselves reproduce existent stereotypes on Latin Americans. Stereotypes are often perceived as something pejorative, related strictly to prejudicial behaviour and generalisations, as can be seen from Santiago-Irizarry's study and from the kind of stereotypes and stories that the Latin Americans in Edinburgh told me when we talked about stereotypes. Pejorative stereotypes exist in Edinburgh, and many Latin Americans have to negotiate the 'labels' attached to them that they themselves reject. However, as has been described in an example of Peruvian musicians, some Latin Americans themselves use stereotypes to modify the way they are perceived by 'others'. Thus, Latin Americans themselves are active 'actors' in "the presentation of [their] self in everyday life" (Goffman [1959] 1990).

Depending on the moment in one's life and the people one is surrounded by, one can 'play' different 'roles' throughout life and create one's self accordingly to one's needs. Stereotypes can be seen as generalisations and imaginations that do not have to have anything to do with a negative image of someone. Stereotypes are a very useful mechanism for the construction of one's self. If we look at Chapter 3, where I discussed 'the collective system of representation' of Latin Americans in Edinburgh as seen through the eyes of Manuel, and the 'Latin American dynamics' seen from Carolina's perspective explored at the beginning of this chapter, we can see that some of the symbols Manuel and Carolina discussed when talking about the collective senses of belonging among Latin Americans in Edinburgh can be discussed and treated also as stereotypes. Stereotypes can be seen as 'a cognitive resort' for an individual to construct one's self and "consistently to contextualise himself and others" (Rapport 1995: 281)

Immigrants – in a world where everything constantly changes and nothing is fixed – use stereotypes to "locate themselves in this migrating world" (Rapport 1995: 271), thus to

find stability and “to construct for himself a personal place which is holistic and constant” (ibid.: 282). However, they are continuously keeping their options open for any personal changes (Rapport 1995: 271). Stereotypes can have forms of ‘opposition’ and ‘exaggeration’. Through comparing and contrasting, individuals gain knowledge on one’s ‘being’ (Rapport 1995: 271). ‘Playing the vis-à-vis’ (Boon 1981: 231 in Rapport 1995: 278), is a means for defining one’s identity while being aware of ‘distinctions between self and other’ (ibid.: 278). Thus, stereotypes can be seen as types of symbols.

Drawing on Cohen (1986), a set of symbols that the Latin Americans in Edinburgh share, along with attached personal meanings to the symbols, bring them together as members of the Latin American ‘community’ in Edinburgh. However, ‘their senses of belonging’ are also reinforced through the ‘stereotypical images of difference’ (cf. Cohen 1985: 113 in Rapport 1995: 279). “To stereotype is also to view from a distance, situate oneself far away, or outside looking in” (Rapport 1995: 279). The experience of immigration makes one able to look from a different perspective at one’s previous self, how one used to think and perceive the world, how it has changed after one has immigrated to another place and is surrounded by different people; and how it might change in the future. “It is personal context which continues to infuse the stereotypical home” (ibid.: 282).

Latin American ‘immigrants’, drawing on Zografou and Pipyrrou (2011: 425-6), have “reconstructed” and engaged in the construction of their “collective system of representation by shaping categories of identity” linked to shared history⁵⁴, language, music, food and traditions. These symbols provide Latin Americans, as Cohen writes (1986: 15), the possibility of making their own meanings. Thus, Latin American identity is based on ‘common’ beliefs and sentiments. However, as members of the Latin American ‘community’ in Edinburgh have in common similar, but not always the same, ways of thinking, feeling and believing, it is essential to acknowledge that the Latin American ‘community’ in Edinburgh consists of individuals from different Latin American countries.

⁵⁴ See Chapter 1.

Latin American identity emerged when members of the Latin American ‘community’ emigrated from their countries origin. At the same time, after a phase of adaptation to life in a new setting, and very often moving to a second setting, national identities along with the Latin American one have been reinforced. As Braidotti (2006: 85) argues it

is not to merely to deconstruct identities or loudly proclaim counter-identities but to open up identity to different connections able to produce multiple belongings that in turn precipitate a non-unitary vision of a subject. Such a subject actively constructs itself in a complex and internally contradictory set of social relations.

Using the concept of ‘nomadic identity’, being a “nomadic Latin American” means “to be in transit within different identity formations, but also to be sufficiently anchored to a historical position so that one can also accept responsibility for the position one takes” (ibid.: 86).

The Latin Americans in Edinburgh I spoke with focus on the things that bond them and that they have in common. In many conversations, similar characteristics to those during my conversations with Manuel and Carolina were mentioned. Many Latin Americans in Edinburgh think of themselves as being very expressive and happy. Touch, hugs and kisses play an important role in their contact with each other. After having met various Scots, many Latin Americans told me that they realised they do not get the same mutual understanding as they do when speaking Spanish or Portuguese with other ‘members’ of the Latin American ‘community’.⁵⁵ Nubia, from Colombia, told me that, “I think there is a ‘Latino’ identity; the general Latin-American way of being. [Latin Americans] are friendly people, who like socialising, share with people.[...] respect [their] family, [their] father and mother. They are hard-working, creative and resourceful”.

⁵⁵ More on the ‘Latin American dynamics’ in Chapter 4.

Chapter 5 - The Latin American Community

Even before I commenced my fieldwork, I had some friends and acquaintances from Latin America in Edinburgh. However, there were not enough to conduct this study and I had to find a way of meeting more Latin Americans. The question then arose where I should meet them. In Edinburgh, there are neither districts nor parts of the city where the Latin American ‘community’ gathers. On the other hand, in London, for instance, there are the Elephant and Castle and Seven Sisters districts where there are many Latin American businesses. Edinburgh is not as big as London, and the Latin American ‘community’ is not as large. However, it is still impossible to point out, for example, a Latin American restaurant, bar, club or a church where the majority of Latin American people do gather. Thus, from the beginning of my fieldwork in Edinburgh there was no particular place where I could have gone to ‘participate’ and ‘observe’. Many Latin American restaurants in Edinburgh aren’t owned or managed by people from Latin America⁵⁶, and if they are (e.g. El Barrio, Garibaldis, Boteco do Brasil) they are visited mainly by the same people. Nevertheless, many Latin Americans do not go to these places frequently. There are certainly some people from Latin America attending salsa, cumbia, reggeaton and batucada parties – or tango milongas, amongst others, although these places are not the meeting points for the majority of the Latin American ‘community’. It is usually the same people attending the same clubs. Other people from the Latin American ‘community’ join only sometimes when there is an event – such as a live music event – taking place. Indeed, music plays an important role in the lives of the members of the Latin American ‘community’. Nonetheless, contrary to the widely divulged stereotypes, not everyone dances salsa, bachata or merengue; and the music people listen to, play or compose is not restricted only to the above-mentioned genres⁵⁷. Latin Americans, when they go out, go to different places – not to the same pub or café, as I had assumed after reading various anthropological studies on Latin Americans in other cities and countries, where researchers point to specific places where Latin Americans meet (e.g. see McIlwaine 2010; Román-Velázquez 1999). Some Latin Americans in Edinburgh prefer to meet at their or their friends’ homes. Many

⁵⁶ They are owned by British people, there is also one Mexican place owned by a Turkish person.

⁵⁷ For more on music see Chapter 7.

celebrations, parties (birthday parties, baby shower parties and other parties etc.) are informal ones. They are informal because they are celebrated among a smaller group of friends, and the parties themselves are more spontaneously organised than the bigger, more official events organised by other members of the ‘community’, such as those from the *Peruanos en Edimburgo* [‘the Peruvians in Edinburgh’] community. Nevertheless, it only happens a couple of times per year.

In October 2013, at the beginning of my fieldwork, I started looking into and spending time on different Latin American Facebook groups in Edinburgh frequently, and requested whenever possible to be added as a member of these groups, such as ‘Mexicanos en Edimburgo’, ‘Peruanos en Edimburgo’ or ‘Venezolanos en Escocia’. I wanted to make sure that I was aware of any interesting events or meetings in which I could participate, as well as learn of the places where Latin Americans attend. It was through these societies that I met many interesting people from different Latin American countries – both students and non-students alike.

Gilberto, Pedro and Victoria from ‘*la comunidad de Venezolanos en Escocia* [‘the community of Venezuelans in Scotland’] started being very proactive and organised protests against human rights violation in Venezuela, as well as talks raising awareness about what is actually happening in Venezuela⁵⁸. People from various Latin American countries – as well as many other non-Latin American countries – came to their events. There is a tendency for the intensification of the Latin American ‘community’s’ integration whenever there are problems with political or economic instability, or when a natural disaster happens in one of the Latin American countries.

Sometimes disasters bring people together. For example, in Chile. It was something comic or tragicomic. Sometimes one is already tired and one says I want to stay here [settle down in Edinburgh], I want to cut my umbilical cord [to their place of birth]. I want to relax. I do not want to know more of what is happening there [in Chile]. I want to be here. Then an earthquake happens – 8.8 on the Richter scale – “Hey we cannot keep away...” Carlos [Victor’s friend] says: ‘Let’s organise something; people lost everything’, Victor told me.

In 2010, they organised a fundraising music and dance event with Latin American food among a group of friends of different nationalities. People came from a number of

⁵⁸ See Chapter 1 for the description of the event against human rights violation in Venezuela.

different countries with the intention of helping Chile. Interestingly, most of the ‘communities’ or organisations of Latin Americans outside universities are informal – not officially registered⁵⁹.

The most active society at the universities in Edinburgh is the *Mexicanos en Edimburgo* [‘Mexicans in Edinburgh’] one at the University of Edinburgh, organising over ten celebrations and events every year. In October 2013 I noticed on their page that they were organising a ‘Day of the Dead’ event. I checked who the organisers of the event were and contacted one of them. I explained to Victor about my project and so we met for a coffee and to have a talk. He chose to meet in Peter’s Yard, a Swedish café. As he later told me, before he came to Edinburgh he lived in Sweden. He likes to come to Peter’s Yard as he has positive memories about his stay in Sweden. And this place, including the food and drinks it serves, reminds him of Sweden. During our conversation he encouraged me to come to the ‘Day of the Dead’ event and offered his support for my research. Victor said that he feels like an “ambassador of his country” when organising and participating in Mexican events in Edinburgh. He wants other people to get to know more about Mexico, as well as to break some stereotypes surrounding Mexicans. Death is an integral part of the life of Latin Americans. In the following section, I examine the Mexican Day of the Dead celebration and how Mexicans commemorate the life of their deceased beloveds while living in Edinburgh. Is this celebration only for Mexicans, or does it also attract other Latin Americans? How do they cope at distance when a member of their family or a close friend dies? What can the Latin American ‘community’ offer them when they mourn?

The Meaning Of The *Día De Los Muertos* [‘Day Of The Dead’]

The cult of the Dead in Mesoamerica⁶⁰ has focused on the Day of the Dead since the Spanish conquest. It is a syncretised celebration with pre-Hispanic roots and Spanish-Catholic elements (Haley and Fukuda 2004: 135, Nutini 1988: 38). The celebrations of

⁵⁹ The Edinburgh Samba School is an officially registered charity, however all the other ‘societies’ and ‘communities’ outside universities aforementioned in this chapter are arranged in an informal manner.

⁶⁰ “The central region of America, from central Mexico to Nicaragua, especially as a region of ancient civilizations and native cultures before the arrival of the Spanish.” (Oxford Dictionaries).

Todos Los Santos differ across Mesoamerica due to demographic and cultural changes, as well as the time when particular regions were conquered and the grade to which they were exposed to the practices of syncretism and acculturation during colonisation (Nuttini 1988: 4). The belief system of the cult of the dead has shown itself to be relatively similar. It is the structural aspect of *Todos Los Santos* that differs from one place to another. In terms of the “physical-ritual manifestations” of *Todos Los Santos*, in some regions vigils – and the creation of altars with food and flowers – take place in the cemetery (e.g. Michoacan and northern Mexico), in Chiapas and the Guatemalan highlands, ritual processions and public displays are important, whereas in Puebla and the valley of Mexico, people focus on the decoration of home altars and the graves of the dead (Nutini 1988: 38).

Two days after the Day of the Dead event, I met with Mercedes from Mexico whom I met during one of the sessions of the *Latinoamérica Canta en Edimburgo* [‘Latin American sings in Edinburgh’] singing group (which I mentioned attending at the beginning of my fieldwork). We met in café Kilimanjaro on Nicolson Street. The café was full and it was very noisy with people talking, eating and due to the coffee machine. In a way it was a good place for us to talk, as no one else was listening to what we were talking about. We ordered coffee and scones first.

The ‘Day of the Dead’ is, as Mercedes told me, a Mexican celebration where normally family and friends gather in order to pray and to recall the family’s deceased members. In some parts of Mexico people go to cemeteries to clean and decorate the graves with *cempazuchitl* [marigold flowers], with candles and with the deceased persons’ favourite food and drinks. They tell funny anecdotes and *calaveras* [poems to recall the deceased person]. At home people prepare the offering altars⁶¹. Factors such as how the Day of the Dead is celebrated, the day and time of the event and what types of decoration one places on the graves and/or altars differ from region to region.

In Mexico, most *ofrendas* share the following components: *pan de muertos*, fresh flowers – often *cempazuchitl* (marigold flowers) – for decorations, candles, the deceased people’s favourite food and drink, and their photographs. Mercedes put

⁶¹ Especially those who live far away from the graves of their deceased ones, would prepare such an altar at their homes.

photographs of the deceased members of her family on her altar – mainly family members from Mexico but also of her British husband's grandmother. If the person smoked or had a favourite alcoholic drink, people put a bottle of the favourite drink and a packet of cigarettes on the altar as well. The 'Day of the Dead' is a time when people can connect with the deceased. By placing their favourite food and drink they help the spirits of the deceased people find their way and come to visit their family and friends.

An important element of the Day of the Dead is food, displayed in two ritual contexts: on gravesites during the family vigil, and also set up on home altars. This food from the Day of the Dead food is called *ofrenda* (offering). An offering is prepared for the deceased kinsmen who are being commemorated and honoured during this celebration. The food has a symbolic meaning when it is displayed in a ritual context (Brandes 2006: 19). The *ofrenda* enables the bond between living and deceased relatives. Mexicans do not believe that the visiting souls really consume the food and drinks on offer. They are of the opinion that the deceased steal the nutritious value of the food and take satisfaction from having it on display. They also believe that the deceased members of the family are spiritually present and appreciate when the living relatives make an effort to remember them.

It is believed that the departed relative visits the home and takes pleasure in the foods that in real life pleased him or her. The visitor, since he or she is a spirit, can only aspire to enjoy the aroma of the *ofrenda*, with which they remain satisfied.

(Ochoa Zazueta 1974: 97 in Brandes 2006: 20)

Ordinary food is also part of the *ofrenda*. This can comprise of bananas, squash, *tamales* and chicken or turkey *mole* ['sauce']. Mercedes prepared for her 2013 *ofrenda* hot chocolate, some sweets, coca cola, apples, oranges, water, mezcal and tequila.

I always remember my relatives and friends who are deceased. I normally put food those people used to like, drinks, always hot chocolate from Oaxaca for my grandmother, whom I have never met but they told me she used to have her hot chocolate frequently. She died many years before I was born. My Mum passed me stories about her, Mercedes said.



Figure 5.1 [Photograph taken by Mercedes, from Mexico] *El Día de Los Muertos* ['The Day of the Dead'] altar, prepared by Mercedes [surname of deceased person removed from the order of service book for confidentiality purposes].

The type of flowers and fruit from the *ofrenda* is also related to the seasonal availability (Brandes 2006: 22). Mercedes, for instance, used roses – flowers that are not popular in

Mexico for the purposes of being featured on the altar. However, those flowers are easy to buy in the UK. ‘I now have much more objects I can put on the altar as offerings than when I first came to Edinburgh, such as sugar skulls’, Mercedes commented. The presence of sugar and sweets on the Day of the Dead in Mexico is essential. During the Day of the Dead, skulls (*calaveras*), animals, caskets and figurines are sculpted and made of sugar (Brandes 2006: 33).

Preparation of the *ofrenda* takes a lot of time and is the most expensive part of the Todos Los Santos celebration. The *ofrenda* is prepared to supplicate and propitiate (Nutini 1988: 108). It is also a way for showing and communicating religious commitment. “The cult of the dead and the propitiation of the souls of departed kinsmen in particular, are suitable ways of communicating with the super-natural” (Nutini 1988: 209-210). For households and non-residential extended families, it is “a symbol of status differences” through which they can impress their neighbour and show their financial success (Nutini 1988: 108). The *ofrenda* is

religious, social, or material manifestation of creativity, the conjunction of folk art and the ideas that regulate human-supernatural relationships. The love and care of execution, the subtle and at the same time dramatic contrasts in color and form, and the appealing strangeness of the entire ensemble is an eloquent statement by which the people honor their dear departed, offer them the best they have, and invite them to join them for a transient moment in their world of existence. This spirit of generosity, peace, and resignation is the fundamental meaning of the Todos Santos celebration to rural Tlaxcalans.

(Nutini 1988: 206)

Mercedes is not religious, though as she told me, she acknowledges “the Day of the Dead is the encounter of ‘Latino’ traditions with religion”. She celebrates it because she has always been doing so. She compared it with people in the UK who celebrate Christmas; they completely detach themselves from the fact that Christmas is originally the celebration of the birth of Jesus. ‘I miss Mexico because, for me it is my centre, a place where I was born – a place where I carried out lots of activities, and that is why I feel attached to Mexico’, Mercedes said.

Mercedes came to Edinburgh 18 years ago. When she arrived, she used to go to one of the clubs on Blackfriars Street, where many Spanish-speaking people from Chile, Peru, Venezuela and Spain used to frequent. “It was a place where I felt very good”, she said.

When she first came to Edinburgh she felt lonely, so she spent every possible moment in the club. She told me that there she felt 'at home'. When she first came to Edinburgh her English was not good and in that club she was able to speak Spanish. She lives in Leith and works as a shop assistant in one of the supermarkets in the city centre. She only works part-time as she does not like her job. She studied biology and two years of ethnology in Mexico. Later on she worked as a teacher in Mexico, but in Edinburgh she has never changed her job as she would have to start from the beginning, obtaining all the required qualifications. She listens on a regular basis to Mexican radio and to the news. There was a time she felt 'homesick' and she told me that this is the reason why she keeps cultivating the traditions and customs she used to celebrate when she lived in Mexico, such as *La Ofrenda del Día de Los Muertos* ['The Day of the Dead Offering'].

The Day of the Dead has also become popular outside Mexico, for example among people of Latino descent in the USA as a counterpart for Halloween. Children at schools are taught about the Day of the Dead, not only to gain knowledge about life in Mexico but also in order to raise awareness of the ethnic diversity and multiculturalism in urban USA (Brandes 2006: 134). People of Mexican heritage, and those from most main ethnic groups in the USA, have adopted the Day of the Dead to fulfil their needs (ibid.: 157). So did many Mexican immigrants in Edinburgh. In the USA many focus on the spiritual aspect of the Day of the Dead, whilst others concentrate on artistic expression, the commercial element of the celebration, community development or as a means for highlighting their ethnic identity (ibid.: 157). For Mexicans in Edinburgh the meaning of the Day of the Dead also differs.

On 2nd November 2013 I went with my Mexican friend, Aileen, to a *Día de los Muertos* ['Day of the Dead'] event in Teviot organised by the society of *Mexicanos en Edimburgo* at the University of Edinburgh. We arrived there at around 4pm. When we entered the room, one of the Mexican girls approached us and invited us to make some paper *cempazuchitl* [Marigold-type flowers], which were later on used to decorate the altar that had been prepared for the deceased. We also made some *papel picado* [a type of cut paper] for the decoration. As we were learning how to prepare the decorations we met other people who came to the event and chatted with them. Apart from Mexicans, I met some Argentinians, Chileans and Greeks. Those who were not preparing the

decorations were at the same time painting their faces with images of skulls, skeletons and death-related ornaments. After the altar was decorated with paper decoration and the *ofrenda*, which included various fruit, sweets, sugar skulls and plastic skeleton toys, was displayed, there was a *calaveritas* contest. *Calaveritas* are satirical, short poems in the form of epitaphs written by living friends and siblings. The event continued with music, dance and food. People danced to salsa, bachata and merengue music and could buy *tamales* to eat. There were many students but also some people from outside the university. The atmosphere at the event was very informal. Those who did not know many people approached others without hesitation and introduced themselves. My friend Aileen told me that she does not celebrate the Day of the Dead at ‘home’ now, but once she has children she thinks she may start celebrating it in order to pass some Mexican traditions on to them.

In the USA, different cities, towns and ethnic communities represent differently “themselves to themselves and to the world at large through this event” (Brandes 2006: 157). The Day of the Dead in the USA is often aimed at reinforcing mainly non-familial bonds – whether with friends, political partners, the local neighbourhood or with their ethnic community rather than with the family (ibid.: 158). Some only attend a special mass, which is mandatory for all Roman Catholics. Chicanos, for instance, have adjusted the celebration to a local context. They have made the Day of the Dead celebration more public than just for family, because they do not have the graves of their relatives in the place where they live (ibid.: 159). The Day of the Dead is – both in Mexico and in the USA – a vent for spiritual attitudes and a time for mourning the deceased. However, it is the site of mourning that differs between Mexico and the USA. In Mexico it is usually the cemetery and/or home; in the USA these are public spaces such as galleries, museums and streets where people come together (ibid.: 178). For the Mexican immigrants in Edinburgh, the Day of the Dead event was an opportunity to strengthen bonds with friends or to build connections with their ethnic community of Mexicans in Edinburgh, especially for those who came to Edinburgh as students without their families, or non-students who also live in Edinburgh without their Mexican relatives. The event I took part in was organised in a public space in one of the function rooms in the Teviot building, which is a part of the University of Edinburgh. Some Mexicans who do not live with their Mexican families, and who did not attend the

Day of the Dead celebrations in Edinburgh public spaces, celebrated it at home. Some did it to commemorate their deceased beloved relatives. Preparing the *ofrenda* and the altar is, for some Mexicans in Edinburgh whose relatives have died recently, a way of coping with the mourning process. Some others display the *ofrenda* because their families have always done so, and by doing so here in Edinburgh they can feel ‘at home’, as if in Mexico. Some of those who have children in Edinburgh, by displaying the *ofrenda* and the altar, teach their children popular Mexican traditions and celebrations.

The *ofrendas* some Mexicans in Edinburgh prepare at home, or during the celebrations in public spaces, are very often similar to what Nutini (1988: 210) calls a ‘transitional *ofrenda*’. Nutini distinguishes between different types of *ofrendas*, based on the elements that are displayed on the altar. As he notices, for instance, ‘transitional *ofrendas*’ are more displayed as a means for self-expression. These Tlaxcalan *ofrendas* that he saw differ from the ‘traditional *ofrendas*’, as he names them, and many of those who display them are sceptical about the value of the cult of the dead and about treating the *ofrenda* as a tool for “propitiation, supplication and worship” (Nutini 1988: 210). Those people have been in contact with “the outside world”, either through labour migration or through various economic bonds that the city of Tlaxcala has. They are more prone to change (ibid.: 210). Some of the households in rural Tlaxcala changed their *ofrenda* into a display that is no longer traditional in any way but is prepared because of a “spurious tradition” (ibid.: 211). There are no households in rural Tlaxcala that have entirely excluded the cult of the dead or the *ofrendas*. However, one can find what Nutini (1988: 211) calls “acculturated households: those that, tenuously bound by tradition, still set up *ofrendas*, although they may seriously question the aim of this ritual act in particular and the protection and help afforded by the souls of the dead in general”.

The *ofrendas* prepared by some Mexicans in Edinburgh are very often not traditional ones, and people who prepare them have incorporated new elements that they or their families may not have displayed in the part of Mexico they are from. Similarly, speaking about the Day of the Dead event – those Mexicans who participated in the celebration came from different parts of Mexico and so their visions – or what they got

used to when they lived in Mexico, or observed from their grandparents – differ. And so the *ofrenda* in the Teviot was a mixture of all the elements that those who built the altar and prepared the *ofrenda* thought should appear during the Day of the Dead celebration. The Mexicans I spoke to during the event concentrated on the artistic expression of the feast – and on cultivation of Mexican traditions – rather than on the spiritual aspect of it and a way for honouring the deceased. Mexicans in Edinburgh have reinvented their traditions. The multiplicity of ways of celebrating Day of the Dead in Mexico is reflected in the multiplicity of ways that it is celebrated in Edinburgh.

Day of Dead as a celebration of national identity

Many Mexicans – whether scholars, journalists, critics or writers – from both Mexico and the USA, give the idea that Mexicans are in close relationship with ‘an abstract entity known as Death’ (Brandes 2006: 181).

To the resident of New York, Paris or London, the word Death is never pronounced because it burns the lips. Mexicans on the other hand, frequent it, caress it, they sleep with it, they celebrate it; it is one of their favourite games and their most permanent love.

(Octavio Paz 1961 in n.a. 2006: 461)

“It is said that Mexicans live side by side with death and are therefore able to confront death honestly and directly. They scorn death, they mock death, they are disdainful and irreverent in the face of death” (Brandes 2006: 181). Irrespective of whether it is true or not, this ‘national portrait’ enforces Mexican national identity. It defines one of the qualities that all Mexican people have in common and distinguishes them from others. This portrait categorises Mexican people into one kind. It depicts “a pan-Mexican uniformity” reducing differences of class, ethnicity, age, religious and place of residence (ibid.: 181). Gabriel Moedano Navarro notes that “although the cult of death is a trait that appears among every people, there is nowhere in the world where it exists so rootedly and with so many profound manifestations as in Mexico” (Moedano Navarro 1960-61: 32 in Brandes 2006: 182).

Day of the Dead is Mexico’s most popular and most commercial holiday. The Day of the Dead preparations attract foreign visitors to experience and see the

colourful, exotic, and entertaining ritual performance and artistic displays. Decorated breads, paper cutouts, and plastic toys, most of them humorous variations on the death themes, are evident everywhere.

(Brandes 2006: 191-2)

Tourists can buy edible sugar skulls, skeletons and candies, along with non-edible sculpted toys and papier-mâché in parks, plazas, open-air markets and shops all over the country (ibid.: 192). Day of the Dead is “the Mexican version of the pan-Roman Catholic celebration of All Saints’ and All Souls’ days – has become much more salient in Mexico than anywhere else” (ibid.: 192). It comprises elements such as *calaveras*, the omnipresence of humour, music and a ludic spirit that are associated with Mexico (ibid.: 192). The Day of the Dead “has become an international symbol of Mexico, promoted by intellectuals, journalists, government officials and even influential Mexicans” (ibid.: 192). The portrait of the “morbid, death-obsessed Mexican”, as shown during Day of the Dead is an essential part of Mexican identity, of what it means to be Mexican – especially in the compound dialogue between Mexico and USA. The Mexican attitude to death is a means to construct and preserve ethnic and national boundaries. It facilitates the differentiation between Self and Other (Brandes 2006: 193).

The Mexican state has been creating and shaping a national awareness and unity between people of different ethnicities and from diverse regions by distinguishing what it means to be Mexican through a contrast between Spain and the USA. In the pursuit for a unique identity, Mexico has used “The Indian, past and present”. It is this legacy, which the Mexican state has been promoting, that distinguishes Mexico from both Spain and the USA (Brandes 2006: 118). Day of the Dead has been promoted by the government, tourist agencies, journalists and scholars as a “unique national treasure and a vibrant expression of Mexico’s distinctiveness” (Brandes 2006: 119).

Day of the Dead is an identity marker for many Mexicans in Edinburgh. However, it is Day of the Dead as celebrated in their own ways, and not by its tourist construction. As Brandes (2006: 70) noted, tourism – aside from inevitably eradicating “local ritual performances” – can also lead to their preservation. In Tzintzuntzan in the west-central state of Michoacan, Night of the Dead was not celebrated in an elaborate way. It is the government that promoted mass tourism in 1970s and has contributed to Day of the Dead being celebrated with enthusiasm and liveliness. The government promoted mass

tourism in Tzintzuntzan and other communities in the area of Lake Patzcuaro in order to transform a rather insignificant ritual event, in which only a few people from the town (and practically no outsiders) participated –

in which thousands of city people clog the streets with traffic, television cameramen flood the cemetery with glaring lights, and the town becomes more or less a great stage prop for a ritual drama. In this drama native townspeople participate as actors but outsiders run the show.

(Brandes 2006: 71)

The state constructs a notion of ‘Mexican-ness’ by making Day of the Dead a tourist construction. However, for many Mexicans it has a completely different meaning than the Day of the Dead that they celebrate within their families as a private feast, and the Day of the Dead celebrated among Mexican immigrants; and not only by them, but also in public spaces in Edinburgh. Many Mexicans I spoke to in Edinburgh, especially those from Mexico city, emphasised the popularity of Day of the Dead among tourists, and how for many Mexicans its tourist construction is treated as a commercial feast that gives an opportunity to earn money, for instance by selling tourist products related to Day of the Dead celebrations at markets and in shops, or by inviting tourists to their homes for a fee and demonstrating their altars. However, some Mexicans I spoke with, after having moved to Edinburgh, also bought some products when they went to Mexico on holiday – such as sugar skulls, which are mostly meant for tourists, in order to place them on their altars in Edinburgh.

The Mexican view of death is contradictory (Brandes 2006: 183). People construct collective identities by differentiating their own group from others (e.g. Barth 1969: 9-38, Hall 1996). As Brandes (2006: 138) notes, some ‘aspects of culture’ become particularly significant identity markers. Significance of death, and the types of death rituals, have become fundamental to the creation of what it means to be Mexican. Opposing visions of death are just some of the means wherein Anglo-Americans and people of Mexican descent differentiate between the two groups (ibid.: 138). For instance, Romo (2000: 33 in Brandes 2006: 138) reveals the Chicano opinion:

Appropriation of an indigenous past and the rediscovery of myth, legend, cultural tradition, and spiritual thought have long been components of political liberation movements throughout the world. In the United States, much of the aesthetic inherent in Chicano/Latino art is drawn from the pre-colonial past. It is an attempt to articulate an

experience of cultural difference, of being ‘the other’, to come to terms with a history of oppression, exploitation, and domination.

The Day of Dead celebration in Teviot, as well as for those who celebrated it in Edinburgh at their homes, was also a celebration of their national identity in Edinburgh – of being Mexican. It was a means of communication of such identity, to themselves and to others – whether Latin American migrants, other migrants or non-migrants born and bred in the UK. Day of the Dead is considered among the Latin American community in Edinburgh to be a Mexican celebration. It is through this event that some Mexicans can differentiate themselves from others and reinforce their ‘Mexican-ness’. However, here I would also like to mention that many Mexicans in Edinburgh do not celebrate Day of the Dead at all. They do not go to church and they do not prepare *ofrendas*. Some of those Latin Americans who are religious may go to a church of different denomination in order to commemorate the anniversary of the death of their deceased loved ones. However, most Latin Americans I spoke with do not celebrate the death of their deceased at all, apart from carrying the deceased in their hearts and on the anniversary of their death, thinking more about them or publishing posts on Facebook related to the life of the deceased in order to commemorate them.

A Peruvian friend of mine commented when we talked about the Mexican Day of the Dead that her grandmother used to prepare an altar and the *ofrenda* with flowers and food for the deceased at her home. However, she had never done it. The Day of the Dead is strongly associated with Mexico; as I mentioned before, the Mexican state has been trying to create a unique national identity and many Mexicans themselves talk about the Mexican Day of the Dead, but Day of the Dead is also celebrated in either similar or different ways in other Latin American countries. And so the event organised in Teviot was not considered to be exotic by other Latin Americans. Furthermore, some Latin Americans in Edinburgh are not interested in any of the Latin American celebrations at all, and this includes any celebrations organised by their own ethnic group. The Day of the Dead event in Teviot was not only meant for Mexicans, therefore people of different nationalities attended it – including other Latin Americans, mainly Chileans. Those people treated it as a regular party and a chance to meet with their friends. There are different ethnic groups within the Latin American community in

Edinburgh, and ethnic communities within the wider Latin American community that interact with each other at different levels.

Death in Mexico and in Britain

“There are differences in terms of being expressive between Latin Americans and people here”, Mercedes commented. Mercedes’ husband is English, and when his grandmother died it was very strange for Mercedes to see how fast the funeral and everything after her death was organised – including the fact that only his mother and sister cried a little bit. Mercedes told me that in Mexico, when someone dies, one cries more and spends time with the deceased. The whole family gathers then.

Brandes (2006: 189) wrote about participating in the wake ceremony after one of the Tzintzunteños being hit by lightening in Mexico in 1967, and the funeral ceremonies that followed. He described the aftermath to be “solemn and subdued”, with mourners, including relatives, neighbours and *compadres* arriving at the casket and praying. While there was no wailing, “women wept silently, and the atmosphere was heavy with sadness” (Brandes 2006: 189). Brandes (2006: 189) described how the next morning four men carried the casket to a cemetery located at a distance, and how it was lowered into the grave. As he observed “[e]veryone appeared tormented by the cruel fate of a healthy man in the prime of life suddenly being snatched from their midst” (ibid.: 189).

The sad thing Carolina⁶² from Mexico told me was that during the process of writing her PhD in Edinburgh, both of her parents died. She could not be with them when they were ill, or when they were in hospital. Moreover, since she had left Mexico she had not seen her mother again. They spoke on Skype, but it was not the same as having face-to-face contact.

I could not hug her since I left Mexico, because obviously when you are a student you do not have much money. [...] This is the difference between being European and Latino. The flight ticket to Latin America is much more expensive. The journey takes 11 to 12 hours. I did not have money to go back to Mexico. The scholarship was good but it did not allow me to go frequently to Mexico. When my mother died I was very busy with my

⁶² I met Carolina a year before my fieldwork at the hen party of a mutual Peruvian friend, and when I began my fieldwork our Ecuadorian friend put us in touch.

PhD work after I came back from my fieldwork to Edinburgh. I was very concentrated on my investigation and worked very hard. Having the opportunity of an Institute letting you do an investigation, you cannot waste. For me, at that moment there was no sense going to Mexico just to see the coffin, because it is not as it is here. In Mexico people die and the next day, almost always...for example if my mother had died this morning, let's assume, *El Velorio* [the wake ceremony] is organised in the afternoon, [lasts] whole night and the next day the burial takes place. So it is something very quick. It is not like here that it can take up to a month to be buried.[...] It costs money and there is no tradition to wait. In Mexico it is something quick. In reality there was no time and I did not want to go and visit the coffin. What I think now, and what I got to understand as time passed, it was not just about visiting the coffin, because when someone close to you dies, that *velorio* ceremony and the burial celebration, that is a celebration in which you can share your pain and you can share memories with your family. And I think this is what I missed – what I had to do on my own here in Edinburgh. And it was something that took me a lot of work. It is something very deep. Here, really, I had no one to share it with. And I think that my sisters, who live in Mexico, they could have their *duelo* [grief] in a healthier way than mine, which was much longer. Everything I have told you, my Mum died in 2009 and my father in 2010, so the only ones left in Mexico are my sisters, Carolina said.

Carolina highlighted her perception of the differences between funerals in the UK and in Mexico. She emphasised, as did Mercedes, the much longer time one has to wait in the UK before the funeral takes place. Carolina and Mercedes explained how important it is for them to have the whole family gathered in the house of the deceased for the wake ceremony [*El Velorio*] and, on the contrary, how quick funeral ceremonies in the UK are. Mercedes and Carolina also highlighted the differences between Mexico and the UK – in terms of how people in the UK do not show their emotions at the funerals they attended, or when those people's parents died, how they tried to escape from mourning and acted as if nothing had happened. When the parents or close relatives of my Latin American friends died, they felt that here in the UK they had no one to share their grief with. Even though they had their families here in the UK, but it was the British side of the family. Carolina emphasised how her sisters' *duelo* ['grief'] in Mexico was healthier and much shorter than hers. Carolina's family surrounded her sisters, and so they were able to share the mourning process. They received support and were not left on their own with their grief, as Carolina felt she had been. Those Latin Americans I spoke to – and who can afford it – would normally try to attend the funeral of their relatives and fly to their country of origin. Those claims of differences between Mexico and the UK are part of Carolina and Mercedes' narrations, by means of which they relationally construct their selves.

The news of death

Death is an integral part of the experiences of Latin Americans in Edinburgh. There is a contrast between how Mexicans treat death during the Day of the Dead celebration, and treatment of death when their relatives actually die, and they subsequently attend funerals. The stereotypical view of how Mexicans perceive death, thus by looking only at the Day of the Dead celebrations, demonstrates only how some Mexicans view death. It does not incorporate the variety of emotions that every human being experiences when faced with death. Mexicans comprise a highly complex society. Their attitude towards death differs at an individual level, and from region to region. Also, people of different classes and different ethnicities have diverse attitudes to death (Brandes 2006: 185). Robert Laughlin (1969: 191 in Brandes 2006: 185), for instance, writes about Tzotzil Indians in Chiapas, Mexico:

Death, 'the end', is not accepted impassively by the Tzotzil, but is always a sudden surprise that shakes every man's uneasy security. Generally it is deemed premeditated murder. No matter how solicitously the lifeless body is equipped for its journey to the afterworld, the dread finality of death is a constant concern.

The news of a relative or close friend's death 'back home' is often difficult for Latin American migrants. The distance between Edinburgh and Latin American countries is huge. As Carolina emphasised, when she was a student she did not fly to Mexico because it was expensive, so the last time she saw her mother was when she first left for the UK to do her studies. 'When my parents died I had no one in Edinburgh to talk to about it. Someone that may have been able to go through the grief process with me', Carolina said. She concentrated on her studies and this helped her to mitigate the grief she had to go through on her own. She did not fly to Mexico when her mother died because she did not want to see just the coffin. Later, she admitted that she regretted it as she could not participate in the wake, and generally she was not with her family and close friends when she needed to be. The singing group Carolina attended in Edinburgh helped her with mourning when both of her parents passed away.

Without looking for it, I felt very *cobijada* [protected and taken in], especially because of the absence of opportunity I had to grieve in the times after my parents' [death]. To be able to sing in Spanish, to be able to have this physical contact – it was a relief, Carolina said.

She emphasised that, especially after both of her parents died, she needed contact with ‘her Latin American community’. By this she meant attending the above-mentioned singing group and various events organised by the Peruvian community. I observed that some other Latin Americans in Edinburgh use Facebook as a means of commemorating the death of their parents, and the anniversaries of their deaths. They write on Facebook poems, messages to the deceased, describe how they feel on that particular day, and how they miss their departed parents. They share their memories and family photographs of the deceased kin. For some Mexicans in Edinburgh, as I mentioned before, preparing the *ofrenda* and the altar at home during the Day of the Dead is how they commemorate the departed ones or mourn their death.

The *Mexicanos en Edimburgo* society organised the *Día de los Muertos* [‘Day of the Dead’] event in Teviot at the University of Edinburgh. The event attracted people from various Latin American countries, and also from other nationalities. Some people attended out of curiosity and wanted to get to know more about the Mexican *Día de los Muertos*. For them, there were activities organised at the event from which they could learn how to make *cempazuchitl* [‘marigold flowers’] out of a tissue paper, as well as how to cut *papel picado* and help in decorating the altar. The organisers of the event spoke via a microphone at various stages throughout the event and told stories of the Mexican traditions of *Día de los Muertos*. Victor, one of the main organisers, and also a moderator of the society’s Facebook page, takes part in the events as he feels that he is an “ambassador for his country”. He wants to introduce Mexico to other people. My friend, Aileen, came with me to the event to spend some time with me and to see what the event looked like. Some Mexicans came to the event with their children, as they wanted their children to get accustomed to Mexican celebrations. Others came because they were far away from their families and wanted to spend the day with a group of friends. I also met some other people who took part in the event as if it was a regular party. They came to have a chat, a drink, to meet new people and to dance.

People who came to the event were both members of the Latin American ‘community’ in Edinburgh, and at the same time members of the Mexican society. Also, people outside the ‘community’ came to take part in the event. The motives that brought those members of the Latin American ‘community’ – who came to celebrate the Day of the

Dead – together in Teviot varied. Drawing from Anthony Cohen (1985: 15), members of the ‘community’

share the symbol, but do not necessarily share its meanings. Community is just such a boundary-expressing symbol. As a symbol, it is held in common by its members; but its meaning varies with its members’ unique orientations to it. In the face of this variability of meaning, the consciousness of community has to be kept alive through manipulation of its symbols.

Each member of the Latin American ‘community’ in Edinburgh who celebrated Day of the Dead did it for their own reasons. Individuals attach their own meanings to shared symbols. They ‘express’ a variety of different things that enable them to agree to the same ‘form’ that is common for the ‘members’ of the group (Cohen 1985: 18). In this case, the Mexican society and the celebration of Day of the Dead. In Edinburgh, among the Latin American ‘community’ in Edinburgh, even within people from the same country, there are differences, such as in this case, of their religious affiliations. Some members of the Latin American ‘community’ attend masses but they go to different churches and to churches of different denominations. Also, some people told me that they believe in God but do not believe in the institution of the church. Therefore, they do not go to church at all and pray on their own terms. Some others are atheists.

Not all ‘symbols’ are shared by all members of the Latin American ‘community’, and especially not by people all of the same nationality. However, there are manifold ‘symbols’ related to one’s daily life⁶³, and events that bring different members of the Latin American ‘community’ together. When they meet with each other and some attend the more formal events – such as the described Day of the Dead event – they share the ‘symbols’ that are “so versatile they can often be bent into these idiosyncratic shapes of meaning without such distortions becoming visible to other people who use the same symbol at the same time” (Cohen 1985: 18). ‘Symbols’ are so flexible that they can be adjusted to be adequate for each individual’s positions. Through ‘symbols’, individuals might experience and demonstrate their connection to a society without negotiating their individuality (ibid.: 18). Symbolism of death and symbolic forms of behaviour when honouring the deceased and the *Day of the Dead* as Mexican national symbols are in the forms of ideas with mutable meanings (ibid.: 18). It is the

⁶³ This is discussed in Chapter 3 when looking at the collective system of representation.

‘communities’ that are significant sources of symbols. Within a specific community, diverse categories are used that are ‘symbolic markers’ of the community and that differentiate it from other communities (ibid.: 19). The community’s form and content, both the intangible and the material one, have a symbolic aspect. The symbols of community are conceptual notions (ibid.: 19). The common aspects of the community do not have to be uniform. “It is about a commonality of *forms* (ways of behaving) whose content (meanings) may vary considerably among its members” (ibid.: 20).

Sliding scale of migration location

Patricia is from Ecuador, and after having lived for many years near Alicante in Spain she told me that she prefers her life in Edinburgh because people are more open and friendly here. We spoke about some level of discrimination of Latin Americans by Spanish people. What happened is that she lived in Spain in a small village, and people there “have probably never left their village and that is how they grew to be so closed”, she commented. Patricia worked in a call centre and later on in a supermarket. She is very open but she also received some not-so-nice comments towards her, which she did not want to return to.

What they [Spanish] always criticise is that you do not integrate in their society, and sometimes this is a mistake because there were many Latin American people who, for example, did not meet with Spanish people and who did not have Spanish friends. I had Spanish friends and also some from my own country. Well, I had many people I knew – but friends with whom we used to go out frequently, few. I used to go out more with Spanish people, and here, on the contrary, [I go out with] those from here [from Scotland]. They criticise that we do not integrate but they do not integrate either, and they also make their own groups. Their ‘ghettos’, Patricia said.

Patricia has more friends from Latin America in Edinburgh than she had in Spain. Apart from (Scottish) partners of two of her Latin American friends, Patricia only recalled having one Scottish friend, a colleague from her previous job, who treated her more like his Mum. Most of her friends are Peruvians [she is Ecuadorian], so the conflict between Ecuadorians and Peruvians based on historical reasons⁶⁴ in her case did not exist. Many Latin Americans told me that the Edinburgh ‘society’ is relatively closed towards

⁶⁴ Due to the Peruvian-Ecuadorian territorial conflict that started in 1821 and finished in 1998.

foreigners⁶⁵; unless one has a Scottish partner, then this helps in meeting some Scottish friends – but it is mainly through the Scottish partner’s social circles. Those were mainly people who have recently arrived in Edinburgh. However, there is a clear difference based on the amount of time Latin Americans live in Edinburgh. Many of those who have been living in Edinburgh for many years managed to build their own social networks of both Scottish and Latin American friends in settings such as at work, with their neighbours, with parents from the school that their children attend, or with members of the same sports club they attend.

Patricia got to know some Latin Americans when she came to Edinburgh on holiday, and was advised at the hostel where she stayed that there were some English classes organised at Tollcross Community Centre. It was there she met Mercedes from Peru, who engaged in conversation with her. When Patricia moved to Edinburgh with her husband they met Mercedes again by coincidence and she started inviting them to various meetings where they also initially met some people from Mexico and Uruguay. They were also invited to the singing group that both Mercedes and Carolina used to attend. Patricia, her husband and their son attended the choir all together for about a year. “It was a beautiful period, because we had different presentations in various places. We sang songs exclusively from Latin America”, Patricia commented. Edinburgh, in a way, is a very small and compact city and lots of people know each other. Some social and personal networks cross over each other. What both Patricia and I realised during our conversation is that we had actually met some 4 years before commencement of my studies at one of the concerts of the salsa band “Son al Sol” in the Teviot when I went to dance salsa and Mercedes introduced me to her. I know Mercedes through a Colombian friend of mine whom I met at a Spanish-English language swap some years before. Mercedes invited Patricia to many parties that she organised. As can be seen throughout the thesis, different Latin Americans at different moments of their lives and in different circumstances refer to the specificity of the places they have lived or visited. They operate between different migration scales – from an individual scale through to their groups of friends and groups of mutual

⁶⁵ However, the Edinburgh ‘society’ does not seem to be so ‘closed’ for those Latin Americans with whom I spoke and who had previously lived in Aberdeen. They have a comparison and they believe people in Edinburgh are more open and friendlier than in Aberdeen.

interests, to operating on a community level; nevertheless they are always operating as individuals. Patricia also talks about the specificity of being in Edinburgh – as opposed to Alicante – when discussing the contact she has with other Latin Americans. On the contrary, when talking about her sense of ‘home’ in Chapter 7, she relates to the transnational links she has with Ecuador and Spain whilst still living in the UK.

Latin Americans sometimes concentrate on a city/town level, be it the differences between Edinburgh and London or other cities in the UK, or in other European countries they visited. They compare the different parts of Edinburgh they have lived in. Sometimes they discuss the differences between some Latin American countries and European countries, including the UK when sharing experiences of their lives in different countries, or when talking about immigration laws.

What I noticed during my fieldwork is that there were some new people who had at that time just moved to Edinburgh, and Mercedes was again a point of contact for them. She is an administrator of the ‘Peruvians in Scotland’ page on Facebook, where she told me people sometimes write to her and ask how it is in Edinburgh and whether she could help them; and so she does. Mercedes is like one of the gatekeepers to the Latin American community. She attends many other meetings and so many Latin Americans in Edinburgh know her. As such, she has been helping many people to get to know other members of the Latin American ‘community’. She has invited some people who just moved to Edinburgh to her home parties (i.e. baby showers) that I attended. She is a very active, helpful and charismatic person. Mercedes almost every year organises Mother’s Day in May, Peruvian Independence Day in July and ‘Chocolatada’ in December in one of the function rooms she rents in St Ninian’s Church in Corstorphine, and people from different Latin American countries attend.

From the beginning when she arrived in Edinburgh, Marisol wanted to meet some Latin American friends. Some people were not aware that there were quite a lot of Latin Americans in Edinburgh, as they have been relatively ‘invisible’. Only when they came to their first event organised by one of the groups, or at the start of the 1990s when they

attended one of the salsa parties⁶⁶, or – like Mercedes from Mexico – came to the Spanish-speaking club on Blackfriars street, or like Lorena, met some Latin Americans by coincidence, they realised that there are actually many Latin Americans in Edinburgh. One of the salsa clubs in Edinburgh was converted three years ago into a Brazilian club, so now there is one more place bringing together the Latin American community. Diana told me that, at the beginning, she did not want to have any contact with the Latin American ‘community’ as she wanted to improve her English and to meet people from other countries. People join or have a need (or no need) to “belong” to the Latin American ‘community’ at various stages of their immigration process, and for different reasons. Some of the Latin Americans I met who have some close Latin American friends or members of their family – with whom they can speak Spanish or Portuguese, and can share the “Latin American dynamics”⁶⁷ – often do not have such a need to seek out big formal events. They tend to surround themselves with a smaller group of friends.

Drawing from Amit and Rapport (2002: 111), ‘community’ can be seen as a collection of “individual life-projects and trajectories in momentary construction of common ground”. Belonging to a ‘community’ is an individual choice and not a matter of ascription. The presence of ‘communities’ is a manifestation of a continuous negotiation between individuals (ibid.: 111). Also, Amit perceives ‘community’ ‘not as aggregation, but rather as the cumulative outcome of a set of choices and strategies employed by individual agents’ (2002: 16). Likewise, George Devereux (1978: 126) suggested that

[B]oth organized and spontaneous social movements and processes are possible, not because all individuals participating in them are identically (and sociologically) motivated, but because a variety of authentically subjective motives, may seek and find an ego syntonic outlet in the same type of collective activity

Members of the Latin American ‘community’, like those who came to the Day of the Dead event, spend time together celebrating and taking part in various events. When adopting Devereux’s approach, it becomes evident that it might only appear that Latin Americans gather for the same purpose and reason. However, individuals have a

⁶⁶ Salsa parties were something new in Edinburgh in the 1990s, and it was possible to meet more Latin Americans attending these. Now salsa has become very popular and commercialised, and more non-Latin Americans than Latin Americans attend these parties.

⁶⁷ Discussed in detail in Chapter 4.

diversity of ‘subjective motives’ that bring them together in the same ‘collective activity’ (Devereux 1978: 126). Likewise, Patricia’s motives for engaging in the singing group – and in the events and informal meetings organised by Mercedes – were different to those of Carolina, who also participated in the same gatherings. Patricia and her husband met Mercedes in Tollcross Community Centre when she came to Edinburgh for the first time on holiday. Mercedes became their first source of contact when they met her again, after Patricia and Arnaldo moved to Edinburgh (their son joined them a couple of months later). Mercedes invited them to the singing group and to the events and meetings she organised. It was there that Patricia and Arnaldo made their first friends – other Latin Americans. They attended these gatherings in order to meet with the friends they had already made, to meet new people and to spend some time out, as they did not know anyone else when they first moved to Edinburgh. People of different ages and nationalities come to these events and meetings. Patricia’s 21-year-old son initially came to these events because his parents did so, and they all enjoy spending time together. He also met some people of his own age and became good friends with one of the Colombian men of his own age. Both of them also started meeting outside the “Peruvian” events.

Carolina started meeting with other Latin Americans to compensate for the absence in Edinburgh of her family members, and later on because of the death of her parents. She also attended the events as she missed the “Latin American dynamics” and she missed being able to speak and sing in Spanish, which she was able to do during the Latin American singing group’s meetings. Also, Mercedes who organises the events of the Peruvian ‘community’, as well as various informal meetings, used to attend the singing group and obviously is present at all the events and meetings she organises. She started organising the events of the Peruvian ‘community’ in order to bring Peruvians and other Latin Americans together. It has been important for her to cultivate and maintain Peruvian traditions. At the formal events she organises there is always Peruvian food, which she normally cooks on her own or with the help of some other friends. Different Latin American musicians play Peruvian and Latin American music, as well as music from mp3s is played. Sometimes Mercedes performs some Peruvian folklore dances with her friends. She is a very active person and likes organising different events or informal meetings at her flat, or get-togethers in some pubs, restaurants, clubs or

cycling trips and days away. Each of the aforementioned individuals found their own motives in the events and meetings they attended. The reasons they attended these gatherings are those that I am aware of. However, without doubt many of them also have their own motives that they are consciously or unconsciously aware of, but I do not know them. Drawing from Devereux (1978: 121, 127), one of each of these people's egos might know about their unconscious reasons – that are different from the aforementioned motives, and which make them want to attend these events and meetings.

Devereux suggested when looking at the “individual as part of a society and as the product of culture”, to take a Freudian approach, and to thus acknowledge links between “Super-ego, Ego Ideal and the patterning of Ego functions on the one hand, and the structure of the *socio-cultural matrix* on the other hand” (ibid.: 121). Through ‘ego-syntonic outlets’, where each of one’s egos can harmonise with other egos without an understanding of the other ego, individuals who are subjectively and differently, consciously and unconsciously motivated can take part and ‘perform’ in the same ‘collective act’. They are therefore driven to pursue gratification of their subjective needs, which were previously unfulfilled, by means of ‘participation as a member of collectivity’ (ibid.: 127). Personal motives are a ‘conglomerate’ within which “different motivational unit present in that conglomerate will be gratified by the collective act in a different way, and to a different extent” (ibid.: 129). Devereux (1978: 125) referred to “a Roman common-sense “psychologist” who said that “*Si bis faciunt idem, non est idem*” (If two people do the same thing, it is not the same thing”). This illustrates well the fact that individuals might “achieve socially identical results, however psychologically the results might not be the same” (ibid.: 125). There are different roles the ‘community’ plays in the lives of Latin Americans. Taking part in various gatherings, in both formal ones and in informal meetings, organised by members of the Latin American ‘community’ in Edinburgh is part of their construction and reconstruction of their selves, and of the home-making process in which Latin Americans construct their homes, “including visiting a particular personal or historical site; watching or taking part in a community ritual; indulging in evocative smells, tastes and touching; inscribing a sentiment on the land or on paper” (Williksen and Rapport 2010: 4).

Chapter 6- How People Stay In Touch?

I frequently login to my Facebook account to see what is happening in different Latin American groups and to check my messages. ‘Dear all! [...] I’m writing because I am coming to live in Edinburgh with my family. I need to know how things work relating to schools and nurseries. Do you have to pay or are they for free?’, someone posts on the ‘Chileans in Edinburgh’ page. Another time one of my Mexican friends on Facebook writes on his wall: ‘We will see what can be done with my sleep’. He has problems with insomnia and has just been to the Royal Infirmary Hospital. I have also just been invited to Lenny’s secret baby shower.

Facebook is a meeting place for Latin Americans in Edinburgh where there are pages for ‘Chileans in Edinburgh’, ‘Venezuelans in Scotland’, ‘Colombians in Scotland’, ‘Mexicans in Edinburgh’, ‘Peruvians in Edinburgh’; as well as the universities’ societies of, for instance, ‘Latin Americans’. Facebook is the means of communication for Latin Americans who have met before and who want to maintain this contact. However it is also a medium across which many people have the opportunity to meet other Latin Americans whom they do not know personally (see Lenhart 2009). The location the person writes from does not restrict them from becoming members of the Latin American ‘community’ in Edinburgh before coming to Edinburgh, however it is reinforced through face-to-face contact between some Latin Americans, at some stage of their stay in Edinburgh. Another benefit is that those who leave Edinburgh can maintain their belonging to the ‘community’. Facebook is “a positive transformation and expansion of spacetime as a social medium” (Miller 2011: 209). I have seen how Latin Americans who live in Edinburgh take part in local conversations in their countries of origin, while some Latin Americans who live outside Edinburgh are active in conversations about life in Edinburgh. Within the aforementioned groups on Facebook people talk about what is happening in their countries of origin and in the UK. They discuss politics, music and daily-life subjects in Edinburgh such as where to buy a certain products, where to go out, what services to use and what to do in case of any problems. Also people who are about to come to Edinburgh to work or study contact various groups on Facebook and pose questions about the ‘life’ in Edinburgh,

about recommendations on how to rent a flat, which part of Edinburgh to rent it in, what they need to bring to Edinburgh and what documents they should bring with them. Besides this, people who are considering coming to Edinburgh ask about the quality of life in Edinburgh, about visa requirements and availability of jobs. Communication via Facebook is available immediately and it does not take a long time for the recipient to receive a message, as it used to be with letters, some Latin Americans commented. However, as Carolina told me, because there is a time zone difference between Edinburgh and Latin American countries, it is not always easy to communicate immediately with distantly located family and friends - as it can be night-time in their countries and they might be sleeping. In this chapter I look at how Latin American identity is strengthened through the use of new media technologies, what their role is in the daily life of different Latin Americans, and how the use of social media enables them to feel like an individual.

Some Latin Americans who had meet online on Facebook to arrange a face-to-face meeting. Others may meet coincidentally by attending the same events organised by one of the aforementioned societies in Edinburgh or through friends they have in common. Gershon (2010) observed that the students she interviewed did not perceive Facebook, video chats or instant messaging as virtual. "These media are not cyberrealms distinct from other interactions, but rather Facebook communication is inextricably intertwined with every other way they communicate" (ibid.: 13-14). Facebook is one of the many ways of communicating with others. Deciding to communicate on Facebook or via instant messaging is not seen as a choice between "real" or "virtual" means of communication but "rather as a choice between Facebook, phone, e-mail, instant message, or in-person communication" (ibid.: 14). Gershon (2008) carried out research at her home institution, Indiana University, mainly among US undergraduates. She writes that students are starting to consider face-to-face communication just one of the media that one can choose when wanting to interact (Gershon 2008: 14). Likewise Latin Americans in Edinburgh consider face-to-face as well as technological communication such as Facebook the media that they can choose to use when interacting with their friends and family. They just decide on the medium that is suitable for a particular type of communication, the message they want to deliver, and the emotions they want to show.

For Eduardo, a student at the University of Edinburgh, apart from Skype conversations with his family members, he substitutes the absence of his family with his flatmates. He has created strong bonds with his friends in Edinburgh. 'Because I share a flat with other Mexicans I have my 'world' reproduced here, along with the Mexican food and the social interaction and it is easier for me to be away from my family back in Mexico', Eduardo told me. What is more, because he spends this time with people from his own country, when he goes out or is at university, he told me, he is very open and has friends and colleagues from lots of different countries.

Carter (2005: 164) in her study of "Cybercity" explored how people who use this virtual space extend the "traditional" concept of social relationships. They move beyond only making and sustaining friendships at work or home, and treat the use of virtual spaces as means for meeting friends in a way that is integral with their everyday lives. These friendships usually move to face-to-face contact, while people extend "their webs of personal relationships to include cyberspace" they make it no more detached from their "real" world but where these relationships are "becoming embedded in everyday life" (ibid.: 164). The groups with the expressions "in Edinburgh", "in Scotland" along with for instance "Latin Americans" or "Peruanos" in their names on Facebook are part of the Latin American 'community' in Edinburgh. The distinction between 'virtual' and 'real' cannot be made, as all the personal relationships are 'real'. An "online" side of the Latin American 'community' is an integral part of the 'community'. The online communication comprises of different media such as for instance Facebook, instant messages, Skype and WhatsApp that one consciously chooses when wanting to interact with others.

Contacting people through Facebook helped me meet more members of the Latin American 'community' in Edinburgh, some of whom invited me to their homes and later on, knowing about my project, to their birthday parties or other celebrations. Otherwise, it would have been very difficult to meet Latin Americans from different countries and walks of life, and of different ages and interests, as not all Latin Americans visit the same places and participate in the same events. Interestingly many people from different Latin American countries are active members on Facebook of

various Latin American groups. They do not limit themselves to contact only members of a group from their own country of origin. Therefore I argue that the use of Facebook allows one to surpass one's national boundaries.



Figure 6.1 Screenshot of some of the events I attended and was invited to them through Facebook



Figure 6.2 Screenshot of some of the events I attended and was invited to them through Facebook



Figure 6.3 Screenshot of some of the events I attended and was invited to them through Facebook

Social capital

Before she went on holidays to Colombia with her husband and her children, Luisa asked for recommendations of places to go with her children by posting a question in her news feed on Facebook. She also asked whether some of the places she had been to before were still open. Through Facebook she announced to her friends and family that they were coming and arranged to meet with some of them. Before Patrick moved from Edinburgh to Ecuador after finishing his studies he asked friends whether he could stay with someone for a couple of days on arrival, so that he had enough time to find a flat to rent. During the death anniversary of her mother, Lorena always uploads her mother's photograph, posts some memories about her and writes how much she misses her.

People then comment on her post and keep the memory of her alive. Juan was admitted to have a serious operation in hospital and wrote a post about how scared he was. Within minutes people started commenting on his post and gave him courage.

The above are the examples of how particular individuals extend the idea of community outwards into new spaces. Latin Americans communicating on Facebook within their social network benefit from 'social capital' (Bourdieu 1986). Vitak and Ellison (2012: 244) distinguish between

bonding social capital which describes various types of physical, social and emotional support that individuals may provide to a network member, and bridging social capital, which includes the information-based resources that can be derived from diverse heterogeneous networks.

Communicating through the Internet has changed the means through which one can receive social support (ibid.: 244). People are 'friends' on Facebook with their family members, friends they know in person, as well as those who invited them, or whom they invited - to be their 'friends' on Facebook, irrespective of the fact that they have not met in person. Having networks of 'friends' on Facebook gives people a sense of attachment: the feeling that there is always someone they can rely on, help, support and give advice to when needed. People ask various questions on their news feed on Facebook that can be seen by people in their social networks (Vitak et al. 2011). In Vitak and Ellison's study (2012: 249-50) of the use of Facebook among adult users between 25 and 55 years old, many informants emphasised the importance of the status updates function that enables one to exchange support messages with Facebook friends. This Facebook feature is especially useful when the respondents have to cope with a major life event such as the death or illness of a family member, or when they want to announce something to lots of people but do not want to phone or email their friends individually (ibid.: 250). Facebook functions may enable individuals to also obtain support from people through 'weaker ties' on Facebook (ibid.: 250) such as friends of friends, or members of the same group. Latin Americans pose questions or update their Facebook 'friends' on the news feed about important events in their lives. This level of support is very important, especially for those who have migrated to Edinburgh without their families and do not live with anyone or know anyone in Edinburgh that they could ask about specific matters. It is also important for other Latin American immigrants

who have just moved to Edinburgh and who still have not developed their own personal networks.



Figure 6.4 Screenshot from a Facebook conversation. An example of a person posing a question about school education and nurseries on the Facebook wall of the group ‘Chilenos en Edimburgo’ and asking for some advice before coming to live in Edinburgh with a family.



Figure 6.5 Screenshot from a Facebook conversation between a person who stated on his Facebook news feed that “he was feeling ill” and his Facebook friends supporting him by reassuring him that he was going to feel better soon and that it was due to the season of the year. Another friend made silly comments to make his friend feel better.



Figure 6.6 Screenshot from a Facebook friend’s wall disclosing the information that he was just at the Royal Infirmary Hospital in Edinburgh and letting his friends know that the doctors were going to try to find a reason of his insomnia.

Technological communication

Before the Internet era arrived most of the Latin Americans in Edinburgh I spoke to stayed in contact with their friends and families through writing letters and making occasional landline telephone calls. Nowadays most people communicate via Internet. They use Skype conversations; WhatsApp to send text messages, videos, photographs and to make phone calls; and Facebook to chat with their friends and family and to ‘track’ their lives by looking at their posts, videos and photographs. Drawing on Bolter and Grusin (1999: 59), their concept of ‘remediation’ expresses how “one medium is seen by our culture as reforming or improving upon another”. Every new technology

“define[s] itself in relationship to earlier technologies of representation” (ibid.: 28) and “the representation of one medium in another [is] remediation” (ibid.: 45). People interweave media by comparing every technology with others available to them (ibid.: 28). When Latin Americans talked to me about the use of various media they compared different media to each other, emphasising what the medium they use can do better than the others. Maria, from Peru, told me that this year she surprised her mother for Christmas and sent her a postcard with greetings. She commented that she normally relies on the Internet technologies when interacting with her family, however she wanted to surprise them and chose a ‘traditional’ means of communication - a postcard. Maria also sent some money to a friend of hers who lives in Peru, so that he could buy some gifts for her family. Without being in Peru she managed to give her mother a physical gift without sending it through the post, but through her friend who bought it in Peru and brought it directly to her parents’ house.

Gershon (2010a: 287) uses the concept of *remediation* from Grusin and Bolter (1999) in her studies when discussing for instance, the American college students’ breakup stories (2010ab) and “unfriend” stories (2011). The author emphasises that each new medium is involved in a web of media ideologies in which the old media impact on how new media are seen, while the new medium affects how old media are considered to structure communication, and how are they used (Gershon 2010a: 287; 2010b: 4). “People’s ideas about the medium shape the ways that medium will deliver a message” (ibid.: 3). The medium is an element of what is being communicated. People possess ‘media ideologies’ that construct what they think about various media and it impacts their use. “Media ideologies are a set of beliefs about communicative technologies with which users and designers explain perceived media structure and meaning” (2010b: 3). Different aspects of a particular medium are important to various people when establishing media ideologies about what a certain medium is as a medium and what it can convey. Maria normally communicates with her relatives and family through Facebook and Skype, so by deciding to send her mother a postcard and a gift she wanted to deliver to her a message of making an effort and carrying about her.

New media have transformed the possibilities for Latin American identities and for the Latin American ‘community’ in Edinburgh. Gilberto, from Venezuela, always sees his

friends on Facebook. He observes how his friends' children grow up, what his friends do and where they go on holiday. Gilberto believes that Facebook is very useful because it enables him to be in a regular contact with his friends and family. When he left Venezuela there was no Facebook and he recalls that later when he came back to Venezuela he saw

Wow how he had gotten older or how he put on weight. That he did not have hair anymore and things like that. But now it does not happen to me so often because as I always see them on Facebook I am already used to [how they look]. I believe that if I had been living in Venezuela I would not have used Facebook at all because I would have seen the whole world all the time and all my friends would have been around me. Unless I had had a friend who lived abroad then I would have used it a little, Gilberto said.

Gilberto adjusted his use of media when communicating with his family and friends whilst living abroad. He is aware of what he can achieve through communication on Facebook and what benefits this particular medium has in his circumstances. The use of various media gives a different understanding of people's intentions, and is always relative e.g. some media resemble more face-to-face contact than the other. For instance e-mails are seen, by the college students among whom Gershon conducted research, as being formal and similar to letters in respect that both include a salutation and a closing (Gershon 2010b: 3-4). What Gilberto thinks about different social media impacts how he uses it and what meaning he thinks he can convey (ibid.: 4). He stated that if he was not living abroad he would not have used Facebook as often as he does, as he generally prefers face-to-face communication. However, Facebook nowadays "comes closer to the sense of the family as a whole group in constant interaction with each other" (Miller 2011: 194). It has reconstructed time and space (ibid.: 195) and enables people who have migrated such as Gilberto, but not exclusively those who have migrated, to maintain and even increase social interaction (ibid.: 198) with their friends and family. On Facebook Gilberto can see photographs of his mother, aunt and cousins. He does not do it all the time but Facebook allows him to see whether they have been to the beach, to a party or at a kids' birthday party. He can also see what his classmates from the university do.

I believe that for the people who live abroad it [Facebook] is interesting. Including here I have friends who are temporarily at the University here and then they go back to their

countries and I remain in touch with them, so I can see how they grow. So it is very useful [...] and I think it is interesting, Gilberto commented.

The vast availability of new communication technologies and the media convergence lead to the transformation of interpersonal communication at a distance. This impacts the experience and enactment of interpersonal communication (Madianou and Miller 2012: 170). There is also a huge demand for information communication technology as the migration and flow of people increases (ibid.: 170). Gilberto does not use Skype or the telephone a lot, as he does not like these types of conversations. Nevertheless, he sometimes connects on Skype with his best friends, or with his mother when he is cooking and his mother can see him on the other end. As such, Facebook and Skype are useful for many Latin Americans in Edinburgh to maintain a regular contact with their families and friends who do not live in the same country as them. Different communication technologies also allow them to follow important events in the lives' of friends and family who are away. Those media are also an integral part of one's day-to-day life. As Aileen explained:

I use FaceTime to communicate mainly with my parents but not everyone has got iPhones, so then I use Skype and Skype allows me to communicate as it is a free and fast medium...the whole world has now got internet and mobile phones and it is much easier to get in touch at different times. In my case the difference is six hours, so it is very difficult to be doing the same activities at the same time. I like to use Skype and FaceTime more for the casual matters. For urgent things it is easier to send text messages. I can stay talking to someone or to send a message directly, or inform them about news or something I want to say. It is much easier, so I use it almost every day. I use FaceTime when I have time, when I do not do my normal activities and especially when I am at home. I have a baby, so it is important that my family can also see the baby and he can maintain a relationship with them. Another medium that I use is Instagram but I only use it for entertainment matters. There are many photographs uploaded on there. I can see matters that are happening. Now many items in shops and in the news are shown on Instagram. It is like Twitter but with photographs. It is much easier to inform myself about everything quickly through Instagram without having to interact on it, so this is what I use more often. And I can also do it at the same time as speaking to someone. And more...if you have an iPad and a telephone, on one you can manage your messages or emails. It is the best way to answer a long email, [to look for] directions or data. I have Twitter but I almost do not use it except to keep myself informed there mainly about global news. Twitter is the fastest one and now you can use it when you have any questions for organisations or people, so it is a lot easier. [...] I use social media every day in one way or another for work, for entertainment or for family [...] including my husband. When he travels it is the best way of being in touch with each

other. No matter what time it is, you can leave messages or make a quick phone call for two minutes. So all these messages and calls are included in the price of the Internet, and being in the places where there is Internet is much simpler. Unfortunately when one goes, like my husband, to a place where there is no Internet in the hotel all communication gets lost and this is a lot more difficult. [...] So people do not text or email unless it is urgent [...] unless they that have Internet in the places they are in. Interactive media are much easier to use for the social aspect including holding conferences via the Internet. I took part in a conference through Skype and I had the opportunity to meet people from work and also find out about some projects or events through Skype and YouTube.

Aileen uses different media for different purposes and for communication with different people. She decides which medium to use depending on what she thinks she can achieve through a particular communication technology, and by comparing it to what other media can and cannot do (Miller 2011: 175). The use of social media is interwoven into Aileen's daily life. It facilitates her day-to-day activities. For Aileen who has her own family in Edinburgh, her husband and child, FaceTime and WhatsApp play an important role in the maintenance of transnational family bonds, especially contact with her parents but also with other members of her family in Mexico. Her parents can speak to her son during video conversations, see his photographs and videos. They can see him growing. Matt can build a stronger bond with his grandparents through regular FaceTime conversations despite not living in the same country.

We are living in a time of 'polymedia' that is "an emerging environment of communicative opportunities that functions as an 'integrated structure' within which each individual medium is defined in relational terms in the context of all other media" (Madianou and Miller 2012: 170). Polymedia is linked to how one puts into practice and experiences interpersonal relationships. It is about "a new set of social relations of technology, rather than merely a technological development of increased convergence" (ibid.: 171). Different communication technologies are used along with, or instead of another channel of communication (ibid.: 175). Aileen's different means of communication bleed into each other. She uses different ones at the same time and for different reasons. Likewise Gilberto decides on when to use webcam conversations and when to use Facebook. When he is on Facebook he decides whether to communicate by updating his status, leaving messages on his friends' walls, commenting on their posts and photographs or whether to use instant messaging through Facebook that allows for

more privacy as the message is only visible to the people he contacts in that particular message. Some Latin Americans I spoke to consider instant messages to be closer to face-to-face communication than, for instance, writing emails as it allows for a quicker dialogue between people and allows the use of pictures and emoticons that can transmit emotions. The wide range of new media allows Latin Americans to choose the most suitable means of communication depending on whom they want to contact and what type of message they want to convey. For Aileen, WhatsApp is the most important medium through which she maintains contact with her family and friends.

On WhatsApp I have different groups, including those of close family cousins' and extended family. And when they send messages on a topic that they talk about not everyone replies. Many of them live in different cities. Very often we talk about world news or local news. I tell them what is happening here and they tell me what is happening there that will interest me, or often about family news. I know that they arrange to meet up and that they go out to eat all together, and I engage in the conversation and wish them a good time when they do these activities all together. Before you could not find out about things that you would not normally hear about, but now you are more aware of what is happening in your family than ever before. I feel really much closer to them and now they can tell me 'look, your cousin is going to a wedding' and I already know about situations that normally I would not know about because I live far away. [...].

The last message I wrote was when Matt began walking. As you can upload images and videos I sent a video message of Matt walking. It is the best way, so that everyone at once could see Matt walking and I did not have to do it separately. Everyone commented.

[...] I have a group of friends, friends from here, work colleagues. [...] I think WhatsApp is the strongest medium that exists now. Around the world it is the easiest way of texting. And on WhatsApp you do not have to ask someone to contact you. When you have someone's telephone number you know whether he/she has got WhatsApp. You look for a number and you send that person your WhatsApp and it does not cost you anything. Because before it cost you and when they responded you 'ok' or 'yes' it was expensive, Aileen said.

WhatsApp is an attractive medium as it only costs 69 pence a year. When cost and access to particular medium happen to be less significant and the media literacies increase, the reasons why certain individuals have decided to use a particular medium as "a social act" is a basis for establishing social relationships (Madianou and Miller 2012: 183). WhatsApp allows Aileen not only to use text messages but also to send images and video messages. The important feature of this social medium is the possibility of storing many contact groups without having to select them all over again or having to

contact people separately when wanting to communicate with many people at once. WhatsApp allows Aileen to be part of day-to-day conversations with her family and friends irrespective of the fact that she lives far away. She is included in the conversations and aware of things happening in her family and friends' lives that normally she would not know about. This is because when communicating through other media such as email, telephone or Skype they would not think of many of those episodes of their lives as something important to report to her. WhatsApp allows for instant communication. Because of it she is able to be close to her friends and family. She feels a stronger bond with them. I argue here that through contact with her friends and family in Mexico, by keeping up-to-date with their daily lives in Mexico, Aileen is able to maintain and reconfirm her Mexican-ness.

The variety of media including new communicative technologies leads to many social and technical problems that people solve through discussions with each other (Gershon 2010b: 6-7). Communicating through various media is a social skill that people have to acquire. Aileen came to an agreement with her friends and family, as to the appropriate use of various media, through observation and conversation with them. People have different 'idioms of practice' and no agreement exists as far as the social etiquette for using new technologies is concerned (ibid.: 7-8). People use different technologies depending on whom they communicate with. When Aileen communicates with her friends, family and colleagues with whom she developed the 'idioms of practice', they can use different media among each other to communicate similar meaning (Gershon 2010b: 6). They create the media ideologies within 'idioms of practice' working out together how different media can be used (ibid.: 11). They often ask each other whether a particular technology is appropriate and share their stories (ibid.: 11). With her friends and family Aileen came up with the best and most appropriate technology that can be used to convey certain messages. As Aileen stated, she uses Skype and FaceTime to discuss casual matters; for the urgent ones she sends text messages. For the daily conversations with her family she communicates via WhatsApp.

During my fieldwork many people started posting official comments discussing their political views and opinions on a difficult political and economic situation, on Facebook on the 'Venezuelans in Scotland' group's wall. That sparked a debate on what types of

discussions and information should be allowed within the group. Some people did not want such comments on the main wall of the group and believed that conversations regarding politics and religion should be discussed privately. Many people were also not happy about allowing many advertisements to be published on the wall of the group. Members of the group came to an agreement and set their rules for communication (Gershon 2010).

Emotions and family

What about the role of emotions in selecting the right type of communication technologies? It is Sunday evening and I meet up with Nicola in Filmhouse café bar. I wait for her outside. She arrives late. We enter, order juices and find a good spot for our conversation. It is quite busy. I can see two gentlemen, one probably in his mid 30s, the other one in his mid 50s, approaching our table holding pints of beer and saying ‘We hope you do not mind us joining you’. The place is busy and near us there are no other tables free. I do not think Nicola or I would be comfortable talking about her life in front of them even though we would be speaking Spanish. I quickly thought of a way to tell them ‘no’ in a polite way. And so I answer: ‘Of course not. I hope you do not mind me recording our conversation, as I might record yours as well’. That was sufficient for them to decide to look for other seats. We both look at each other and say ‘uff’. I do not record our conversation as between the lines Nicola tells me she would not be comfortable with it. Later on I understand better as I can suspect from our conversation that she is staying here illegally.

Nicola left her son with her family in the Dominican Republic when he turned two years old. She likes speaking with him on Skype, however she told me it is always difficult, as she cannot hide her emotions when her son asks her when she will be back. She knows it will not happen soon because if she were to visit him she would not be able to return to the UK due to her visa status. She has not seen him for more than 5 years and always tells him ‘I will be back soon my darling’ but she knows it is not true. It is easier for her to communicate on Facebook and through emails, as that way her son cannot see her sad face, she told me. At the same time she prefers conversations with a use of a

webcam because she wants to see how her son is growing up and how he feels, as through webcam she can see his facial expressions.

Different people interpret differently what emotions can be shown through various media and what emotional effect they have (Madianou and Miller 2012: 179). For instance in Madianou and Miller's study (2012) the majority of informants were of the opinion that through webcam more can be disclosed than through a telephone conversation (ibid.: 179). In their polymedia theory they emphasise that polymedia is not only about appropriateness of use of particular media for specific relationships, they also underline how the majority of relationships construct a specific configuration of media that work for their specific communicative needs (ibid.: 179). Polymedia is therefore for every individual a "personal repertoire of communication media and of emotional registers" (ibid.: 180).

Communicating through Internet, through video-calls plays an important role in maintaining and strengthening transnational links, particularly when conversations are about everyday life (Herrera 2011: 66). This relates especially to parents like Nicola who emigrate and maintain contact with their children who stayed in their countries of origin. Frequent contact makes parents more 'present' in the lives of their children and emotional bonds are strengthened. Many migrant parents would attempt to visit 'home' for special celebrations such as "baptisms, wedding anniversaries, and fifteen-year-old birthday celebrations, that contribute to the recreation of family ties through the ritual and symbolic representations of the unity of the family at home" (Herrera 2011: 66).

Latin Americans in London⁶⁸, among whom McIlwaine (2011: 84) carried out her research, irrespective of their country of origin or socio-economic situation, are in frequent and regular contact with their friends and family 'back home'. 79% maintain contact by landline telephones, around 50% write emails, use chats and phone by use of cheap phone cards (ibid.: 84). Nearly a quarter of her respondents are in contact with their friends and family every day, almost three-quarters are in contact at least once a

⁶⁸ The report presents the results of a quantitative survey of over 1,000 Latin Americans in London (McIlwaine 2011: 7).

week. Her qualitative research revealed that maintaining contact with family is very important particularly for those who immigrated to London on their own and whose families stayed in Latin America. By contacting family members through telephone and the Internet Latin Americans can strengthen some of the relationships that have been affected because of them living separately. However, it is not always possible due to the lack of close face-to-face contact, especially between parents and their children (ibid.: 85). McIlwaine (2007: 40) also noticed in her previous research that there is an inclination to decrease the frequency of communication the longer one has stayed in the UK.

In the case of Latin Americans in Edinburgh, among whom I carried out my research, maintaining contact through communication technologies plays a symbolic role in bringing together families and friends who live in Latin America, or in other countries, with those Latin Americans who immigrated to Edinburgh. Frequent physical visits are not always possible and having that ability to stay ‘up-to-date’ with their families’ lives and participate especially through video-calls, in important celebrations help to maintain bonds with the families.

Simon connects on Skype during his birthday, or on birthdays of someone from his family or closed friends, during Christmas and during other family get-togethers. His family speaks to him on Skype during the family celebrations and makes sure that they plug the computer into their TV in order to see him on a big screen in the centre of their living room, next to which the whole family gathers. Even though Simon cannot physically be with his family and friends, at least by being connected to them through Skype he can maintain contact with them and participate in the events they organise. Spending time with and celebrating for various occasions with the family is very important to many Latin Americans I spoke to.

Placing photographs and videos on Facebook is a way of sharing moments with people who are not with us in the place where we are staying. Lenny, originally from Bolivia, was pregnant with her first baby while I was doing my fieldwork. We spoke on several occasions. During one of our conversations we talked about what it is like being pregnant and having children while being far away from family and friends. “I could

not get the same level of support through Facebook that I would get if my friends and family were also living in Edinburgh”, Lenny said. During Lenny’s pregnancy her friends and family had difficulties accepting the fact that she was far away and that they could not support her. They could not watch her belly growing, could not touch it and be with her in that joyful moment. ‘They organised my baby shower in Bolivia while I was here in Edinburgh’, Lenny commented. So physically she did not participate in it, however they had Lenny’s photograph present at the baby shower. Later on they sent her some photographs from her baby shower. “It was strange for me to look at the photographs seeing my mother and friends having a party and celebrating without me”, she said. She saw a photograph of the room decorated with balloons, with lots of food and with people smiling and having a chat. But this is what Lenny’s mother and her friends needed in order to share their happiness in awaiting for the birth of Lenny’s baby. The use of photographs and homemade videos plays an important role in connecting people transnationally. It allows one to take part ‘virtually’ in vital events in the life of ‘absent loved ones’ (Fumanti 2013: 201-2).

As could be seen on Facebook, Latin Americans in Edinburgh very often upload their photographs and videos from their daily life in Edinburgh. They show their family and friends what they do, where they have been to, where they live and how their friends look. On Skype they have video conversations and are also able to send photographs and videos through file transfer. Through WhatsApp they frequently send text messages along with photographs and videos to their friends and family in Latin America. What is important about the new communication technologies is that Latin Americans in Edinburgh can ‘see’ their friends and family in Latin America, and in any other places in the world where they live, in a cost effective way. The visual aspect strengthens the transnational bonds between people who live at a distance. The ‘visual register’ enables different relationships between family members who live far away from each other (Francisco 2013: 4). “The new ‘eyes’ on one another”, be it a computer camera or social networking website construct a new reinforced connection and intimacy between its family members and possibility of care between separated parents and children (ibid.: 4). It is not the same contact as the face-to-face one. Nicola really misses not being able to touch and hug her son. New communication technologies can not completely replace the face-to-face contact that is so important for many Latin Americans in Edinburgh,

However those media play an important role in facilitating ‘visual’ contact and thus maintaining transnational links with their friends and family in Latin America, or in any other countries where they live. The following chapter scrutinises the sense of ‘home’ for particular Latin Americans.

Many Latin Americans in Edinburgh use different communication technologies as a part of their day-to-day lives. Various social media have become extensions of face-to-face communication, however they have not completely replaced it. They are just used by lots of people for different reasons and at different moments of their lives. By being active on different Latin American groups in Edinburgh on Facebook, individuals decide on the extent to which they want to be involved in contact with other Latin Americans and how they want to reinforce their Latin American-ness. At the same time communication technologies also allow one to be in frequent contact with one’s friends and family members. The following chapter scrutinises the sense of ‘home’ for particular Latin Americans.



Figure 6.7 Screenshot from Facebook of the information from the admin of the group ‘Mexicanos en Edimburgo’ about the purpose of the group and its use.



Figure 6.8 Screenshot of a Facebook post from Gilberto, the admin of the group ‘Venezolanos en Escocia-Venezuelans in Scotland’ complaining about lots of irrelevant information and advertisements people post on the group that have no informative use. He warns that only that day he had to block more than 55 people. He encourages people to post more local events in order to stay informed about what is happening in their communities.



Figure 6.9 Screenshot of the responses to Gilberto’s post: a person agreeing with him and offering any information needed about studies, another person who stated that he got involved in the group while living in Scotland and is now living in Germany, but would like to remain part of the group even though he is Mexican - he received lots of help and was welcomed warmly by the Venezuelan community; another person reminding everyone that Venezuelans should agree with each other whether in Venezuela or outside it; and a person agreeing with Gilberto but mentioning that they cannot forget their Venezuelan roots and traditions.

Chapter 7- 'Home' And Home-Making Practices

'This is my casa, this is my hogar. This is my centre.[...]', Lorena tells me, explaining how she feels in Scotland. 'It took me a while to adapt mainly because I did not know any "Latinos". All my friends were Scottish. My friends' girlfriends took me in, they were taking me out for a walk but the "cultural" change was so big. [...],' she says, 'After three years I started feeling a necessity to look for other Latin Americans in order to share codes of behaviour, conversations and jokes that I really missed. And this beautiful/ nice *grupito* ['a small group'], with Lorena [a friend of Lorena's from Chile], is a mixed group of different countries and nationalities but it is very good. Plus I wanted to practice the language because I did not speak it except when I phoned my 'home',' she adds. 'Now after having lived for 10 years in Scotland I love Scotland. For me, it is my place in the world. I felt bad initially things but I like the people, landscapes, 'culture', the way of being and the education [...] now I choose to live here. It is not that I am tied here for any reason, including my husband who says "if one day you want to move from here we will try to live abroad". No, now I am staying here'.

'[...] In my case it was not an option whether or not to leave my country. I was a child - I left Chile when I was 9 and came to Scotland when I was 12 [...] I came with my parents and siblings. [...] We came here as political exiles. [...] We did not choose to live in Scotland. It was about leaving Latin America. It is different from an immigrant who did not like his country or wanted a better life. There was no choice. We left in order to survive. Adaptation was not a choice. You have to do it. To live you have to learn the language, but also you have the obligation to adapt...to go to school. I had to learn how to write because in Latin America you write in a different way...simple things like how to walk, speak with people. It is all a process. For us it was gradual. We never knew whether the military coup d'état would pass in a year, perhaps this year things would get better. But it continued and continued....You try to wait for when that day arrives. You have to continue here. Later on you get used to it. I went to school as we gave up on the idea of leaving. [...] I still feel Chilean even though I have British papers. As time passes one or the other does not exist, it is a mixture [of identities]. Certain things change. One thinks well and badly about both here and there', Victor

said. 'But is Scotland your 'home'?', I asked 'Here is the closest to an *imaginary home*. I can be "Latino" but I can also feel happy among Scottish people. But I will never feel Scottish', Victor replied.

Latin Americans, after having migrated to Edinburgh and left their country of origin, constantly change due to their new life experiences. Their awareness and knowledge is evolving but, what is more, also the countries and friends left behind are being transformed (Werbner 2013). Latin Americans have taken different paths to get to Edinburgh. Their life stories vary. They also live their lives in Edinburgh differently. They all construct and re-construct their 'homes' while living in Edinburgh, however each one in their own way. Various scholars have approached the studies of home and home-making processes differently. Some have studied houses and societies (Lévi-Strauss 1983, 1987, 1991; Bourdieu 1970). Others have concentrated on houses and dwellings (Heidegger 1971, Ingold 1995, Oliver 1987). Gurney (1997) and Somerville (1992: 530) looked at the home as an "ideological construct". Somerville (1992: 530) argued that "home is not just a matter of feelings and lived experience, but also of cognition and intellectual construction: people may have a sense of home even though they have no experience or memory of it". He further claimed that "the distinction which people make between home as ideal and home as experienced in actuality is itself socially constructed through ideological forms" (ibid.: 530). For Jackson (1995) home is a lived experience with a metaphoric meaning. Holy (1998) looked at the Czech state's imaginations of homeland and home. Miller (2001) focused on material culture and home; he looked at "the processes by which a home and its inhabitants transform each other" (ibid.: 2). The author looked thus not only at what one can do with one's home but also "what the home does with us" (ibid.: 4). For Chen (2012: 61) "home is more than a feeling, a hope, a practice or a journey". In her study of *qiaopi* - "a particular type of family remittance letter" (ibid.: 59) among Chinese emigrants she looked at the meaning of home the *qiaopi* letters convey, and argued that preparing them is a part of a home-making process during which migrants construct their ideas of home.

The ideas of 'home' have transformed and they are used differently depending on the contexts and temporalities. For many members of the Latin American 'community',

'home' is reflected in "their narratives and objects of emotional investment in the present" (Daswani 2013: 46). For some "home" is perceived more in a sentimental way than a physical attachment sometimes to various places - but foremost it is an attachment to other people who form with them what is called 'home'. Howes and Classen (2014: 90) write that different societies experience the world through a mix of diverse "sensory models and techniques". They argue that senses can only be entirely understood in the specific cultural context. "Ideas are communicated through sensory impressions all the time. There are culturally-modulated ways of touching, tasting and smelling, and culturally-meaningful textures, tastes and smells" (ibid.: 3). Bearing the above in mind, I am looking in this chapter at how Latin Americans in Edinburgh construct the fluid understandings of 'home' and what the sensory aspects of the home-making processes of some of the Latin Americans in Edinburgh are.

I connected on Skype with Lorena. I had met her three days before at her friend's son's birthday party, and since then we had chatted on Facebook and agreed on a time we could talk. Lorena came to Scotland from Argentina 10 years ago. She fell in love with a Scot and it was much easier for her to come to Edinburgh than for him to go to Argentina as he does not speak Spanish. They met in Argentina in a club while dancing. Lorena initially struggled to get used to so many differences between Scotland and Argentina. 'And here I remember I came on the 21st of January in winter. And I came here from an Argentinian summer. It rained for two weeks. And I thought: "What am I doing here?"', she said. Through migration one spatially reconfigures "an embodied self" which leads to "a transformation in the very skin through which the body is embodied" (Ahmed 1999: 342). Drawing on Ahmed (1999: 342), Lorena, when she first moved to her new home in Edinburgh, experienced it mostly "through the surprises in sensation". She paid attention to the rain and cold that intruded "an unexpected space into the body" (ibid.: 342). Moving to Edinburgh involved "a partial shedding of the skin, a process which is uncomfortable and well described as the irritation of an itch" (ibid.: 342).

Lorena thought that she initially did not have a need to look for other Latin Americans. However as we spoke she admitted that actually she believes that because of a lack of contact with other Latin Americans it was more difficult for her to adapt to her life in

Scotland. After three years of having lived in Edinburgh she made friends with some Scottish girls and found a job. At that moment Lorena realised that she had started missing ‘the Latin American dynamics’⁶⁹ and felt a need to spend time with people who would share the same codes of behaviour and types of jokes⁷⁰, and who would speak Spanish - but she did not know where to meet other Latin Americans.

One day she went to a supermarket and accidentally heard a Uruguayan couple speaking Spanish. ‘I heard them speaking and at the beginning I thought, “Ohhh they are Argentinian!” but they told me “no we are Uruguayan”. And we started talking and since then we have been good friends’, Lorena said. She thought they were Argentinians as they had a similar accent, and began speaking with them. Since this short encounter in a supermarket they have started meeting up with each other. Through them later on she met other Latin American friends, and through other friends she met more Latin Americans, girls from Chile, Venezuela, Argentina and Uruguay. They have now their own Latin American female social circle. They meet regularly for different occasions.

Later on as I found a job I started doing a voluntary job. I think it was a wonderful opportunity because you could meet so many lovely people. It helped me stop feeling embarrassed of my English - so that I could speak and people could understand me. I studied English and I had this [grammatical] tense, that tense, another tense and tried to put it all together to make a conversation. And I practiced a lot and people supported me. Later on I found my first paid job in a clothing shop and I met lots of girls and started having my own circle. And then I met the girlfriends of my husband’s friends. And from that moment on I missed a lot, because I miss my family a lot, my friends, Argentinian food. [...] I cook Argentinian dishes but there are things that you cannot find here. There are cuts of meat that do not exist here, types of restaurants are very different, and I would like to eat some things but here I can’t. But taking away all this, now I choose to live here.

Being able to speak Spanish was very important for Lorena as at ‘home’ with her husband she only spoke English. ‘In this period there was no Skype, nothing. So it was maybe once a week that I phoned my family by telephone. But at the beginning I remember it was winter, ugly, cold, rainy and in some moments I thought “No. I am leaving here because it is horrible”, she said. Before getting to know her Latin American friends in Edinburgh, she could only speak Spanish when communicating

⁷⁰ More on Latin American dynamics and jokes in Chapter 4.

with her family in Argentina via telephone, and only some years later through Skype and WhatsApp. The access to telephone, drawing on Howes and Classen (2014: 3), strengthened the importance of Lorena's sense of hearing, and access to computer communication allows Lorena the senses of sight and hearing combined. However, for Lorena the other senses - taste, smell, and touch - seem to be equally important. She feels that telephone and computer communication do not allow her to experience her world fully, probably because those means of communication do not activate her 'sensorium' as much. By speaking Spanish- her mother tongue, Lorena can keep her memories, and allow her feelings and ways of thinking to be present in the communication with her friends from the Latin American social circle. She constructs "a home-from-home; in fact a home in itself" (Rapport 1998: 80).

Lorena brought some cakes that she made for her friend's son birthday party. She goes through the garden where the party takes place and distributes the cakes from a tray to the guests. A friend of hers tries the cake and immediately puts all of the fingers of her right hand together near her mouth and then moves them quickly back, opening them, while at the same time making a smack sound with her mouth. 'It's delicious', she says. This gesture is used by many Latin Americans when commenting on something that they find tasty.

Lorena's new home is embodied in "a set of habitual practices" (ibid.: 80), through "words, jokes, opinions, gestures, actions, even the way one wears a hat" (Berger 1984: 64 in Rapport 1998: 80), and through her Latin American sensorium. What is more, the feeling of not being tied to Edinburgh and of always having the possibility of returning to Argentina makes her feel well. It enabled her to settle down more quickly in Scotland. However, as I will describe below, Lorena realises at the same time that she actually would not like to go back to Argentina.

Rapport (1998: 63) analysed what is 'home' to two Jewish immigrants who moved from the United States to Israel. As the author observed, for the immigrants David and Rachel it was important to preserve their "distinct American, individual, even diasporic identities" while staying in Israel (ibid.: 63-4) and establishing their forthcoming national identities, Israeli ones, by reconstructing "the cognitive and physical

environments of their past (US) ones” (ibid.: 66). Rapport argues that for David and Rachel it was “out of a preservation of the essential and central imagery of their old selves that their new immigrant identities were to be constructed” (ibid.: 81). Lorena also maintained the imagery of her old self by emphasising her Argentinian-ness, by listening to Argentinian radio, eating Argentinian food, receiving parcels from Argentina with her favourite food, maintaining a strong bond with her family in Argentina and behaving the Latin American-way⁷¹ with her Latin American friends. By this she means being more straightforward, open and emotional with her friends than she could ever be with her British friends. Using hand gestures while speaking, talking loudly, making jokes in Spanish, being physically closer to her friends and being able to use touch as a form of interaction with her Latin American friends are all behaviours through which she constructs her new identity and her new ‘home’.

In Rapport’s study (1998), as Rapport, David and Rachel continued to be at home “in the old verbal routines of criticizing and distancing [themselves] from the present”, so Lorena remains at ‘home’ with her female friends, carrying out commonly accepted modes of behaviour.⁷² With her friends Lorena constructs “a future based on common opposition to what [they] had together wandered into” (ibid.: 80).

This is my ‘home’ and I remember when I met an Argentinian girl who was from England. I met her after having lived here for two years, and she told me ‘when you have kids you will not miss things as much’. And when I had kids - I have three - I thought ‘no, I miss it more because I miss not having help. I miss that my sister is not here, that she could come to look after the kids for some time’, so those things I missed. But now I have my family. This is my circle and we are here. [...] I think it’s because I kept myself occupied and when I missed my family I would phone them a lot, plus I used to travel to Argentina a lot and this helped me. As I did not have any kids, I would travel twice a year, so that is quite a lot considering distance. It helped to “charge my batteries”. And when people were coming to visit me, I don’t know, it is like awaiting your parents cousins to come visit. In three months a friend of mine is coming. [...] And later on when I could eat something Argentinian, when someone sent me a parcel. [...] Every time I go [to Argentina] I bring a full suitcase. So I bring *dulce de leche*, which is a type of caramel that is much better than the one you can get here. In Argentina we drink a lot of a thing that is called *mate*. I bring chocolate, biscuits, some ‘salsas’ (sauces).

Lorena has felt nostalgic at times. She misses her family in Argentina and Argentinian food, and when she eats something Argentinean she immediately feels ‘at home’ - that

⁷¹ More on the ‘Latin American dynamics’ and jokes in Chapter 4.

⁷² More about the Latin American codes of behaviour in Chapter 4.

other 'home'. The same when she receives a parcel from her family with some Argentinian food products. Sutton (2000: 122), drawing on Fernandez's research "on the symbolic processes by which the ""return to the whole" is attempted", states that "for migrants...food is essential to counter tendencies toward fragmentation of experience" (ibid.: 122). Food sent from home "evoke[s] a wholeness, or fullness in experience" (ibid.: 125). The sensory experience that Lorena gets from receiving a parcel with food or bringing a suitcase full of food when coming back from Argentina brings her Argentinian 'home' closer. It is elicited by "memory of taste and smell" (ibid.: 125). Here I would like to draw on Petridou (2001: 89) who states that because food is experienced through multiple senses it can "evoke the experience of home as a sensory totality". Lorena opened her business where she prepares cakes 'with Latin touch', as she described. While preparing 'Latin' cakes for her customers through senses of smell, touch, sight and taste she enforces her Latin American home in Edinburgh.

'Home' is "a place for reconnecting and reconstructing networks of people, images, labor, culinary practices and memories of relatedness" (Moore 1992 in Daswani 2013: 42). It can be both physical and metaphorical, however for Lorena and some other immigrants it is found in "a routine set of practices, in a repetition of habitual social interactions, in the ritual of a regularly used personal name" (Rapport and Dawson 1998: 27). For Lorena and some other Latin Americans *hogar* ['home'] can also be found where one is with their children and husband/wife. 'If you are married, *hogar* ['home'] is a place where you are with your family and you transmit on to them what you want them to learn, values, and it is also a place you share with your family. You are with them. You learn from them and they learn from you', Stela told me. At the same time many Latin Americans do not stop feeling nostalgic about their 'homes' in the countries where they grew up. Nostalgia is "a longing for a home that no longer exists or has never existed. Nostalgia is a sentiment of loss and displacement, but it is also a romance with one's own fantasy (Boym 2001: 7). Blunt (2003: 718-9) proposes a concept of 'productive nostalgia' that depicts one's "longing for home that was embodied and enacted in practice rather than solely in the imagination, [...] oriented towards the future as well as towards the past and to a sense of place that was both proximate and distant". Lorena romanticises about her 'home' in Argentina. She keeps

her 'home' in her imagination. However, she also actively constructs her 'home' in Edinburgh through various home-making processes in order to find an anchor in the place she currently lives in.

Lorena is aware, after having visited Argentina, that in the place she fantasises about both she and the people living there have changed. Lorena is not the same person she was when she first left Argentina. She is aware of the fact that she could not live in Argentina anymore as her way of thinking has changed. Many immigrants, when they go to visit that 'home', have to go through a clash between the image of the 'home' they had in their minds and the reality of how the 'home' they had left really is now. It often appears that the 'home' they longed for does not exist anymore. As Alfred Schütz (1945: 375) clarified about the homcomer,

the home to which he returns is by no means the home he left or the home which he recalled and longed for during his absence. And for the same reason, the homcomer is not the same man who left. He is neither the same for himself nor for those who await his return.

Schütz (ibid.: 375) emphasised that the above is relevant to describe any type of homecoming. Therefore, I believe this can also be applied not only to people who returned 'home' for good, but also to people like Lorena who immigrated and live abroad, and who travel and visit their family and friends who stayed in one's country of origin. During these visits, immigrants temporarily return to their family 'home'. Moving away from 'home' and between 'homes' leads to changes in the

degree of intimacy... the degree or reliable knowledge we have of another person...intimate knowledge enables us to interpret what he means and to forecast his actions and reactions... The change in the system of relevance and in the degree of intimacy just described is differently experienced by the absent and by the home group. The latter continues its daily life within the customary pattern.

(Schütz 1945: 373)

Lorena recalled her recent visit to Argentina. During it she tried to imagine how it would be to go back to Argentina for good, however she said that she could not as nothing is the same.

When I go on holiday people especially come to see me. It is all very nice because they are all there for you. [...] I realised that not only after having lived here⁷³ but also while

⁷³ in Scotland.

travelling. When you do not leave Argentina, you do not go away from your country, you only have one way of thinking. This is the one with which you grew up. So when I started getting to know other cultures, other people, and especially living in Edinburgh I saw so many people from all over the world. It was all so different that I thought: how can we think like this in Argentina, how can we do some things like that in Argentina. So I evolved. My mind opened. On top of that Argentina is a country that is not progressing, I would say it is deteriorating, it is like a gap/rift, the distance is getting very big. I could not go back to live there. There are many things...this is my first world. Not if one moves to a place that is worse than Argentina. [...]

Migration generates the feeling of “double consciousness” an awareness of seeing oneself through the eyes of others (W.E.B. Dubois 1994: 5 in Werbner 2013: 42). Lorena like some other migrants shares a feeling of being split. Consequently she has to share her sense of belonging and alienation like in an example of W.E.B. Dubois with regards to American blacks: “One ever feels his two-ness, – an American, a Negro: two souls, two thoughts, two unreconciled strivings” (ibid.: 42). When migrants go and visit their friends and relatives they have to concomitantly cope with the insider and outsider outlook. They have to see oneself through the perspective of those who stayed at ‘home’. Werbner (2013) claims that migration makes migrants realise that they no longer share the same “culture” and relationships with people and places they were related to. Similarly Lorena’s perception significantly started to differ from those in her ‘homeland’. On the one hand she feels bonded to the people she grew up with but on the other hand she realised that she actually differs from them. She actively re-creates her self in relation to her understanding of the concept of home.

Some Latin Americans in Edinburgh among whom I did my research go to visit their family and friends in Latin America regularly. The tickets are very expensive, therefore those who can afford it would go only once a year, others every 2-3 years. When they travel they usually go for at least a month. I met people who tend to go for at least 3 months and even those who usually spend 6 months visiting their family and friends. The first ‘home’ where one grew up “is not a destiny of our journey but the place from which we set out and to which we return at least in spirit” (Hobsbawm 1991: 65). Many Latin Americans have created their ‘homes’ in Edinburgh while at the same time travelling both physically and in their imagination to ‘homes’ they grew up in - visiting people who used to form their ‘home’, or still do, depending on how one perceives the notion of ‘home’. The movement of Latin Americans between different homes, and

their ‘return’ to their family home, are part of continuous processes of one’s home-making and of the creation and re-creation of one’s self.

The Imaginary Home

I went to see Victor playing some Latin American music in Henry’s Cellar. He played a couple of compositions on his *charango*⁷⁴. We met a week later in Loudons café. As we begin to speak he tells me that this is probably his last interview, as he has done it many times before and is tired of it. Also it is painful to refresh his memories all over again. Victor, originally from Chile, has been living in the UK for 36 years. He was granted, with his family, a status of a political exile.

In my case we left because of military coup. And my memories are of military coups and militaries. In this moment you stop being a child because there are things that you need to know, so that the family survives. You have to shut up and not say certain things. The same happened to Jews by the Germans, they had to hide and not talk about things. Children have to grow up. [...] [...] When I first came to Chile I was a foreigner. But I keep being a foreigner both here and there. I can speak as they do but I do not feel completely Scottish. In Chile I also communicate...but the language changes, the words you use, you do not ‘modernise yourself’, one word can make a difference. [...], Victor said.

Home’ is not completely individualised or forever absent; it is always rooted in important social relations and reactions to migrants’ moral careers during their life (Werbner 2013: 42). Many Latin Americans, after having immigrated and having experienced that dissonance of not knowing where they belong, have enforced their “imaginary roots” to the Latin American ‘community’ in Edinburgh. Latin Americans in Edinburgh are linked to the Latin American ‘community’ constituting interconnections between its individual members. Some migrants when visiting their family and friends in the place they grew up in initially feel like returning ‘home’. However, they realise that they are rather considered foreigners and aliens (Werbner 2013: 44) and many feel ‘foreigners and aliens’ themselves.

“Within the physical bounds of a given home site there may thus be space for many homes, between which a given person may migrate in the process of developing and

⁷⁴ A small Andean 10 string lute instrument.

maintaining personal identities” (Olwig 1998: 226). Victor did not have a choice and had to flee from Chile with his family because of the life threat to his family due to the Pinochet’s regime. He left it when he was a child. With his family he first immigrated to Argentina as it was reasonably close. His family wanted to go back ‘home’ once the political situation improved and their lives were not threatened. However, the political situation in Argentina got worse there as well and his family was also not safe there, so they had to escape to another country. They became political exiles in the UK. Victor told me that they waited for a long time hoping that the political situation in Chile would resolve quickly. However, it lasted and lasted. At the beginning Victor’s stay in the UK was like being in a ‘waiting room’ as he was still hoping he would go back to Chile. He initially did not treat the UK as his ‘home’. However, soon he realised that it was impossible to return to Chile and that he had to stay in the UK. For Victor the adaptation that he had to go through when he arrived in the UK was obligatory and for him it has been “all a process”, as he said. He had to gradually learn the ‘way of living’ in the UK. It was not something for him that occurred immediately.

Victor lives in a “mobile habitat and not in a singular or fixed, physical structure” (Rapport and Dawson 1998: 27). As Rapport and Dawson (1998: 27) argued, the more mobile home becomes, the more it comes to be perceived as “individualised and privatised”. Each individual chooses his own and that choice might be overlooked or irrelevant to others (ibid.: 27). For ‘migrants of identity’ “‘place’ is not taken for granted, is not given, is not a thing-in-itself, is not exclusively singular, and is not once-and-for-all” (Rapport and Williksen 2010: 3). For many Latin Americans in Edinburgh it is *hogar* [‘home’] that plays an important role and not *casa* [‘house’]. *Hogar* is where one’s heart is, *casa* is just a building. This distinction by means of using different word choices for *hogar* and *casa* was emphasised repeatedly during my fieldwork in Edinburgh when I discussed with various members of the Latin American ‘community’ the idea of ‘home’ and what it means to them. Subsequently, *home* is not about a place, although home-making practices happen among the members of the Latin American community and are in a certain way related to the city of Edinburgh. It is “no longer a dwelling but the untold story of a life being lived” (Berger 1984: 64 in Rapport and Williksen 2010: 27). It is about “a life being lived in a movement” (ibid.: 27). Immigrants such as Victor are in a constant movement. For Victor it is a physical

movement from one home to another but foremost he is involved in an imaginary journey in his mind where he travels through the oceans of past memories and experiences. The concept of *home* is constantly being re-produced in particular moments. 'Home-making is a continuous work' (Rapport and Williksen 2010: 3).

After having lived in the UK for 36 years Victor still does not know exactly where he belongs. For Victor being able to travel could have created his nomadic identity and allowed him to "think of life as a journey" (Jansen 1998: 107). As Jansen (1998) explained in his article on post-Yugoslav identities, nomadic identities can be liberating and at the same time lead to a feeling of insecurity and injustice. Being able to physically travel, escape, to Argentina and later on to the UK made Victor feel liberated. However, not being able to go back to Chile for years made him feel insecure and sad, as he had no choice but to settle in the UK. He has been torn between his good and bad childhood memories of Chile, his visits to Chile as an adult, and his life in Scotland. As Bahloul (1996: 28) argued,

Remembering the house in which an uprooted culture originated and developed involves reversing history and sinking symbolic roots into a vanished human and geographical world. The remembered house is a small-scale cosmology symbolically restoring the integrity of a shattered geography.

Victor treats Scotland as the closest 'imaginary home' as he truly feels like a foreigner both in Scotland where he grew up and in Chile where he was born. There are moments when he feels 'Latino'. He can be happy among Scottish people, however he never feels Scottish even though he can speak as they do with a Scottish accent. When he visited Chile for the first time he felt like a foreigner there and he still does when he goes there, as in Chile he is not up-to-date with the vocabulary that changes. "Latinos" realise, he thinks, what it is to be an immigrant once they have immigrated to Europe. Many people in Latin America still believe in the 'American dream' concept, which they also apply to Europe and as such think that when one emigrates to Europe they will have, as Victor said 'no problems, that everyone is well, and that at the end of the day it is another world. That everyone has a beautiful house'.

Many Latin Americans who immigrated to Spain thought that it would not be so difficult because the language is the 'same'. However, as Victor emphasised, they

quickly realised that the way of life is different. ‘There are many people here who learn what it is to be a “Latino” and they get closer [they approach] to “Latinos”. [...] Later they realise what it is to be an emigrant when they immigrate to Europe. Even though they go to Spain with the same language, it is a different case. There is a different way of living. [...]’, Victor commented.

After having left Latin America, many Latin Americans realise that “the borders that [within Latin America] we have do not make much difference to who we are, that we have a lot of music that is similar, food with different names”, Victor said. Many Latin Americans living in Edinburgh, apart from individual ways of living that every person has, experience their lives as Latin American immigrants and this brings them together. It is not the experience of ‘being an immigrant’ but of being ‘a Latin American immigrant’ in Edinburgh. One can argue that some of those Latin Americans who do not believe in the nation-state divisions between Latin Americans but choose to belong to Latin American ‘are cosmopolitan’⁷⁵ because they combine the “local specificity with universal enlightenment” (Werbner 2006: 469). They live their lives, construct their ‘homes’ and root themselves to the Latin American ‘community’ in Edinburgh irrespective of national, ethnic, racial, religious, language and identity differences. Meanwhile they maintain their transnational family links and refer to, for instance as Victor did, to similar music and food that for him surpass the territorial divisions in Latin America. At the same time they are aware of “other cultural practices and values” (Werbner 2006: 8) both within different countries in Latin America as well as generally when being exposed to the ‘Other’ – ‘non-Latin Americans’ in Edinburgh.

Lorena, from the previous section, and Victor experienced a “spatial longing, as well as a temporal desire, for an imagined past and future” (Daswani 2013: 37). They perceive themselves as being part of the Latin American ‘community’, having their group of Latin American friends with whom they share the same language, similar music, food, type of jokes and ‘social dynamics’. At the same time, by the practice of sending and receiving parcels, Lorena maintains contact with her family and creates her sense of belonging through the flow of goods. Telephone and internet contact enforces the relationship that she has with her family in Argentina. Victor, when he first came to the

⁷⁵ from the notion of ‘vernacular cosmopolitanism’ (Bhabha 1996 and Werbner 2006).

UK, maintained that bond with his relatives in Chile by writing letters as there was no internet, not everyone had a telephone at home, and foremost it was very expensive. Contact with relatives, especially during military coup d'états or when a member of his family was ill, was particularly stressful as sometimes letters were lost. Some other times it took a long time to receive a response, Victor commented. These days he contacts his father by telephone easily whenever he needs to, so this relationship is much easier. He does not feel that he completely belongs to any of the places⁷⁶.

Once displaced from a first social milieu, no subsequent one truly turns into home, causing individuals 'to be at home in none' (Rapport and Dawson 1998: 31). The 'homeless mind' is difficult to put up with. One is nostalgic for the state of being 'at home', where one felt peacefully, securely and socially homogenous (ibid.: 31). It is through "continuity of movement that human beings continue to make themselves at home" (ibid.: 33). People see themselves "continually in stories, and continually telling the stories of their lives, people recount their lives to themselves and others as movement" (ibid.: 33). For many Latin Americans in Edinburgh constructing 'home' is based on their individual past lives and on the present. This is because home-making is a continuous and active process during which Latin Americans are in contact and get involved with those with whom they can share the experience of being a Latin American immigrant - of coming from Latin America.

Sensory Home-Making - Smell, Touch, Sight And Taste Through Food And Material Objects

'I sometimes do not know where I belong', Mercedes told me. She added that the lyrics of a song by Facundo Cabral (1970) best describes what she as an immigrant is going through:

I'm not from here, nor from there
I have no age, nor future
and being happy is my colour
of identity⁷⁷

⁷⁶ More on communication of Latin Americans in Chapter 6.

⁷⁷ own translation

Mercedes, at her flat in Edinburgh for the second year, has been growing *rocotos*⁷⁸, *huacatay*⁷⁹, *aji amarillo* ['yellow chilli'] and *oca*⁸⁰. Chilli peppers, a sub-tropical food, are popular in the Andean countries. Chilli peppers are important ingredients in everyday or seasonal cuisines. They are used for different types of spicy sauces that are frequently eaten with potatoes or other root crops (Sanabria 2007: 255), such as *oca* that Mercedes grows in Edinburgh. Her mother sent her seeds and she planted them here. Some of these she moved for a while to her mother-in-law's greenhouse, so that they could grow better during the winter time, however the plants started bearing fruits at Mercedes' house. She uses the fruits and tubers of these plants for preparing traditional Peruvian meals such as *rocotos rellenos* [a type of a dish with stuffed peppers]. Many of Mercedes' Latin American friends have asked her for some seeds so they can also try to plant them here in Edinburgh to use later on when cooking.



Figure 7.1 *Rocotos* grown at Mercedes' flat. [Photograph taken by Mercedes Cohen]

⁷⁸ type of capsicum chilli in a shape of an apple or pear

⁷⁹ it is a type of Peruvian black mint

⁸⁰ it is a developed in Andean tuber crop. It can be of different colours.



Figure 7.2 *Rocotos* and *huacatay* grown at Mercedes' flat. [Photographs taken by Mercedes Cohen]

Food can be experienced through a mix of different senses that can bring back memories about one's home as a 'sensory totality' (Petridou (2001: 88-9). Growing, cooking and eating some of the familiar food ingredients activates various senses that Mercedes uses when creating her 'home'. When growing, cooking and eating various crops and vegetables Mercedes comments on their texture, shape, size, colour, smell and taste. For Mercedes

cooking is not simply an everyday practice, but an attempt to synesthetically reconstruct and remember, to return to that whole world of home, which is subjectively experienced both locally and nationally, if not at other levels as well.

(Sutton 2001: 127)

The use of various senses is part of the multisensorial dimension of Mercedes' home-making. Smells, tastes and touch of familiar food products evoke memories of

Mercedes' life. To draw on Hecht (2001: 141), Mercedes' life memories that can be both sensorially and materially embodied influence how she defines herself and what her "sense of purpose" is. Mercedes' 'home' is a 'sensory home' (Pink 2003: 46) that consists of a set of different sensory components such as smell, touch, sight and sound. It is constructed and its meaning is elicited by means of sensory experiences and the use of various senses (ibid.: 46). Following these lines, Pink (2003: 47) suggests that home can be constructed, not only through the use of "a static material, physical, and visual environment, but as a feeling and atmosphere that might be temporary, and involves other sensory experiences". For Mercedes familiar smells play the role of "practices of affirmation or resistance and statements of self-identity" (ibid.: 50). Through different senses Mercedes reformulates what her 'home' means. In doing so, she creates her everyday home in Edinburgh.

"Homes exist in time: in moments of individual and collective performance, which are both mundane and memorial (ceremonial)" (Rapport and Williksen 2010: 3). There are manifold means and practices Latin Americans in Edinburgh use when constructing and imagining their *hogar* ['home']. Each person creates it differently. For some people 'home' is present in small objects that they have brought with them from their country of origin, or that were sent to them by their friends and families. Or in some other cases Latin Americans themselves, when 'on holiday' or 'visiting their friends and relatives' brought some material objects that they placed in a central location in their *casa* ['house']. For Mercedes planting seeds in Edinburgh that her mother sent her from Peru can be seen as her home-making process that evokes sentimental feelings about her home - but this can also be seen as a metaphor of her existence in Edinburgh. By planting seeds she rooted herself in Edinburgh. This made her feel more secure and, drawing on Jacobson (2009: 369), by it she made herself temporally at home in Edinburgh, a place that is far away from her "objective" home.

I asked some people whether they could send me photographs of objects that are important to them, which they had brought from 'home to home'. Pablo, originally from Peru, sent me a couple of pictures with some of the items that are important for him. He brought them from Peru at the time of my fieldwork.



Figure 7.3 From the left *charrango* instrument, *Sol del Cusco* hot chocolate, above it the *boldo* tea next to it *Medisana Emoliente classic tea* and *mazamorra morada* [Photographs taken by Pablo, from Peru]

He brought a *charango* with him that he hopes he can learn how to play here in Edinburgh from some of his Latin American musician friends originally from Peru and Chile. He also brought some *Sol del Cusco* hot chocolate, *boldo tea*, *Medisana Emoliente classic tea*⁸¹ and *mazamorra morada*⁸². The items that Pablo brought back

⁸¹ It is a herbal tea made from various medicinal Peruvian plants; this one is made of herbs such as boldo, barley, flax seed, cats claw and *muña*.

⁸² A Peruvian dessert made from purple corn.

with him from Peru to Edinburgh, which include food and a musical instrument, have helped him re-create his *hogar* in Edinburgh.

A house encompasses an array of different materials, from furniture and fixtures to ornaments and décor, collectively creating a dwelling experience that is greater than the sum of its parts. For these are more than mere ‘things’, they are a collection of appropriated materials, invested with meaning and memory, a material testament of who we are, where we have been, and perhaps even where we are heading. They are what transforms our house into our *home*, a private cosmos that houses our memories of bygone times, as well as our hopes for what is yet to come. They bind our past with our present and our possible futures, thereby framing and reflecting our sense of self.

(Hecht 2001: 123)

Some people bring some objects with them when immigrating. Others, when living ‘abroad’ for a while, ask their friends or family to send them parcels with individually selected goods. It is possible to buy some food ingredients in London as the Latin American ‘community’ there is much bigger and there are many Latin American shops. Whenever someone goes to London they bring back many different food ingredients for themselves and for the friends in Edinburgh who have asked for something specific that they could not find here. Aileen frequently asks her family to send her Mexican food products such as various salsas that she cannot get here as well as women’s magazines - so that she can stay up-to-date with all the gossip about celebrities, actors and generally about various events taking place in Mexico. Luis from Bolivia often asks his father to send him CDs of salsa and bachata music. He wants to stay up-to-date with the music trends in Bolivia. By bringing familiar objects and placing them in their *casas* in Edinburgh, some Latin Americans can compensate for the feeling of ‘rootlessness’ and not knowing where they belong. It is also a means of having a “piece of one’s homeland” close by, and to maintain the bond with those who stayed ‘at home’, the second ‘home’.



Figure 7.4 The first object on the left is *El ekeko* that Carlos keeps by the front door. It brings luck and prosperity. On the top right there is a photograph of Machu Picchu that Carlos told me is the “meaning of being Peruvian”. On the bottom right there is a photograph of cushions that “are important because they represent Peru- *la costa sierra y selva*” [‘The Coast, Highlands and the Rainforest]. “They also have a message of peace and love. They were made by one of the mothers’ from Amy’s club [Carlos’ wife] ” [Photographs taken by Carlos, from Peru]

Patricia took her husband and their youngest son to Ecuador after not having been there for six years. They brought various items back with them to Edinburgh. Patricia sent me some photographs with their descriptions. She brought the Ecuadorian national flag back with her which for her is “an important symbol because it represents my origin, where I come from. Every time I see the flag of my country I am very moved [touched] and I feel nostalgia for my *tierra* [‘country’, ‘homeland’ or in a direct translation just ‘land’, ‘ground’ or ‘earth’]”. *Tierra* plays an important role for many members of the

Latin American in Edinburgh. I have heard some Latin Americans saying that they always hold memories of their homeland in their hearts, and how smells, images, sounds and tastes of their *tierra* come back.

I met up with John, Patricia's youngest son who is 21 years old, for a conversation one day. Later on John's friend Esteban, originally from Colombia and of the same age, came to join us - as they were heading to the gym together afterwards. Esteban lived in Barcelona for over ten years before moving to Edinburgh, where he has lived for two years. At the end of our conversation he said that he misses Colombia a lot and that one day he is definitely planning to go back and live there. John concluded that 'sooner or later *Pachamama* will pull/get [*tirar/sacar*] everyone closer together'. *Pachamama* is the Mother Earth, worshiped especially by the indigenous people of the Andes, but also by some other people from Andean countries whom I have met in Edinburgh and who respect nature and Planet Earth (also known as Mother Earth). John believes that you remain somehow attached to your *tierra*. It is a magnet that pulls you and your thoughts throughout your life towards your homeland. Erika from Peru told me that many Latin Americans in Edinburgh do not respect Mother Earth and she does not understand the way they behave. On the contrary Erika and her Scottish husband, who many Latin Americans I spoke to told me has a Latin American 'soul' and an Argentinian Spanish accent, both pay respect and give offerings to the Mother Earth. They have attended many shamanic trainings sessions and courses at the Edinburgh Shamanic Centre, and have become Shamans.

Spirit is in everything, everywhere and in each one of us. Our Spiritual mission is to support the preservation of old Shamanic ways and teachings, promoting unity and empowering communities for personal and planetary healing.

(The Edinburgh Shamanic Centre)

Erika and her husband are in tune with nature and respect its spiritual life through meditation and by taking part in the 'Offering to Mother Earth' ceremony. Mother Earth is one. By respecting it and giving offerings Erika can feel close to 'home' everywhere on the planet. Mother Earth is one of her 'homes'.



Figure 7.5 The top photograph: “This is an important symbol for me because it represents my country, where I come from. Every time I see this flag from I get very emotional and feel nostalgia for my country”. The bottom left hand photograph: “are spices from my *tierra* [‘land/homeland’]. The yellow ones are a mix of garlic, leek, onion, cumin and parsley. The other one on top is cumin. The bottom one is a bag of seeds of a plant called *achiote*. We mix them with oil to give colour to a stew. It is like a colorant that they use in Spain, but a natural one. The bottom right hand photograph: “are the artisan products from the city of Santo Domingo de los Colorados where I am from”.
[Photographs taken by Patricia, from Ecuador]

From her last trip to Ecuador Patricia brought handicrafts (a set of maracas and a straw basket made by the Tsáchila people from her hometown Santo Domingo de los

Colorados). “I brought these handicrafts to feel at home”, she said. She also brought various spices with her i.e. a mixture of spices such as garlic, onion, cumin, leek and parsley. Another thing she brought with her is a bag of *achiote* that she uses to mix with oil to give a colour to a stew. Patricia told me that it is like a natural colorant. “You realise that all of these things are important to me because I have a bit of my *tierra* with me and because of this it is not so difficult to come back from holidays and also to return again to the routine here”, Patricia concluded. Both Mercedes, who had some seeds sent by her mother, and Patricia, who brought some seeds with her, have with them part of their *tierra*.

The feeling of being “rootless”⁸³ is the worst thing that Manuel from Ecuador told me can happen to a “Latino”. It is a feeling of not knowing where one belongs. In a way Latin Americans try to “root” themselves to their “past life” and their ‘home’ they left when they first immigrated. It is an “imaginary home” based on their memories of the place, however that imagination is disturbed once people go back and visit the place they lived in and speak with their families and friends who stayed there - as we could see from what Lorena and Victor told after having visited their ‘home countries’.

Leaving one’s country of origin and living in different places, surrounded by different types of people, opens one’s horizons and changes the perspective of how one perceives the world while posing ontological questions of ‘who am I?’ and ‘to what do I belong?’. Various types of identities and a sense of belonging change and operate differently at different moments in one’s life, and so does the meaning of ‘home’. As physical objects are ‘tangible site[s] for memory’ (Sutton 2001: 123), being surrounded by objects brought from home countries helps people cope with the feeling of disjunction and create ‘home’ in Edinburgh.

⁸³ More on feeling “rootless” when discussing ‘None[t]here-ness’ as an identity in Chapter 2.

Haran's 'home'

Being rootless, displaced between worlds, living between a lost past and a fluid present are perhaps the most fitting metaphors for the journeying, modern consciousness the 'typical symptoms of a modern condition at once local and universal'.

(Nkosi 1994: 5 in Rapport and Overing 2002: 264)

'Home' can be explained well when looking at its relation to a story. Through telling a story one talks about movement and is involved in that movement (Rapport 2002: 28). Throughout the narration one places people, objects and events one talks about through time (ibid.: 28), and by telling stories where one is able to emplot various life events one gives meaning to one's life and self (Kerby 1991: 3 in ibid.: 29). Through narrations one can get to know oneself and better understand the surrounding world. 'Home-making' can be thus seen as a universal practice that attains different shapes at various moments (Rapport and Williksen 2010: 5).

Haran has lived in Edinburgh for over 20 years. I contacted Haran through Facebook explaining that he was on the "list of friends" of my Peruvian friend on Facebook. He was mistrustful at the beginning and asked exactly which friend I knew, as he was acquainted with more than one woman with the name I mentioned. I told him which one I knew and, laughing, he answered that I had passed the test. He does not trust many people he does not know who contact him on Facebook. After I had contacted him, he told me that he texted his Peruvian friend, who is married to a Polish girl, asking whether he knew me but he did not. He said what helped him to agree to meet me was that he has very good Polish friends, plus he also saw a photograph of my son on Facebook. He invited me to his 'home'. Going there I thought he would be living with his family as I could see photographs of him and his family on Facebook, however he lives on his own. He lives in one of the deprived areas of Edinburgh, in one of the multi-storey slab blocks. This part of Edinburgh is also known for lots of 'anti-social' behaviour and drug use. So when I arrived there and could not find the right staircase I was afraid to ask for directions as I have a "foreign" accent, I have experienced hate incidents myself on various occasions while living in Edinburgh. However I had no

choice so I asked someone leaning out of a balcony and that person tried to guide me, unfortunately without success. Being an immigrant can make you feel insecure. In the meantime I texted Haran and he came to get me from downstairs and we took a lift up to his flat.

He did not let me record our conversation as we tackled very private matters and also many people know each other in Edinburgh, so he did not want to be recognised. I took some notes but mainly listened, then wrote down everything about our encounter in my diary as soon as I got back home. I had to build trust when we started speaking as he was not very trusting. He asked me the reasons why I am doing my project and what I wanted him to say. He also asked who the other Latin Americans I had already spoken to were. So we start our conversation sitting in his living room. On the floor there is a rug made from alpaca wool, on one of the walls a round Andean wool rug with Alpaca ornaments on it. Next to it hangs a feather war bonnet. "It is the material culture within our home that appears both our appropriation of the larger world and often as the representation of that world within our private domain" (Miller 2001: 1). Haran asks 'can I smoke?'. He smokes quite a lot taking, breaks from our conversation, rolling one cigarette after another. The air was full of smoke. He is divorced. His son and daughter stay with their mother in another town in Scotland. His son used to go to college in Edinburgh and now he is studying at the university - something to do with the "sound". When he talks about it he slows down and pauses. He modulates his voice from a loud one to a very quiet one. I can feel loneliness and sadness in his voice while he speaks. This is how I perceive him through my own sensory experience and whether it is true or not only he knows. He seems to be willing to share his life story with me. The longer we talk the more detailed an account of his life he gives.

Haran came to Scotland at the beginning of the 1990s to visit his sister who was expecting a child at that time. Their mother was experiencing some health problems, so she could not come and she persuaded Haran to visit his sister. Initially he did not want to but he agreed. He came on a 6-month tourist visa and then had to go back to Peru. During this time he travelled to one of the cities in the West Midlands where he met a woman in a pub, the future mother of his children. Just before he left, he found out that she was two months pregnant but he had to go back to Peru. It was very complicated for

him to return to Scotland, so she came to Peru. Unfortunately Haran was not with her when she gave birth. He saw his son only in April 1991 when he was 3 months old, when he arrived in Peru with his mother. 'What an emotion it was', he said. Haran was very happy and touched that he was able to see his son. They went back to the UK. After arranging all the visa requirements they got married in the UK and he obtained the "indefinite right to remain". I am not sure exactly when they got divorced but he sometimes thinks that "it was because of too many "cultural" differences".

In Peru he worked as a nurse, here he works in one of the factories. He does not speak much about it. Later on he started being a musician and he has been doing that until now. He has had his own band for over 13 years and travelled across the UK. It is a band that plays folklore and instrumental music. He told me that he wants to go back to Peru when he is "old" because it is different here from in Peru. Children do not look after their parents. They send them to care homes and that is it. However he wants to be in his 'home' in Peru surrounded by family and friends. "If home is where the heart is, then it is also where it is broken, torn and made whole in the flux of relationships, social and material" (Miller 2001: 15). Haran has already got a Peruvian pension. This year he is turning 60 years old. 'I am going to go back to Peru once my role as a father has finished. My son is still studying and might need me', he said.

On the mantelpiece there are lots of pictures of his family He shows me photographs of his father, mother, children and ex-wife. "A whole range of individual or family "memorabilia" - watches, photographs, rings, presentational items and heirlooms of all kinds can have tremendous significance for people, evoking many memories and often forming part of family myths and traditions" (Roberts 2002: 66). The photographs of Haran's family, and other material objects that he brought from Peru and stores at his home in Edinburgh, all carry a reminder of his family's social relationships. Subsequently that influences his idea of home. Haran constructs his 'home' using past memories that he brings back when looking at the photographs or at the material objects he brought from Peru to Scotland. He offers me tea, so we take a break from our conversation and go to the kitchen where he shows me more photographs of his family and Peru. He has a drawer full of photographs. On the cooker he points towards a Peruvian meal he made. It was fried meat with onions that he told me his son does not

like. We go back to the living room and he shows me his son's Higher National Diploma in Engineering. He is proud of him and said that he keeps telling his children that education is very important. His son is 23 years old. His daughter is younger but he does not talk much about her. He shows me pictures of her when she was 13 years old and they went to Cusco together. I am not sure whether they are in a frequent contact, nevertheless he misses his children and would like to have better contact with them. He mentions that either "yesterday or today" his son stayed overnight at his flat because he was in Edinburgh. When he got divorced he made sure he had a frequent contact with his children. He did not want another man to just move in all of a sudden and be in their lives. He used to visit them 2-3 times a week.

For Haran 'home' is related to the presence of his family and to the role he plays in it. The lack of strong ties or the fact that Haran thinks that he is going to shortly 'pay his duty' and finish his role as a father makes him feel 'sad' and 'redundant'. He told me that he wants to move back to Peru where he will be surrounded by his relatives and friends. Those are the people that he can rely on and who will not leave him on his own in case of any problems. They will provide food and look after him. In Edinburgh he is on his own. His children live in another city. He fears that if he stayed in Edinburgh he would be left on his own in a care home when he gets older. For Latin Americans family is at the centre of understanding and importance of what 'home' is.

Haran lives in the present by maintaining his past, through his narrations and memories that he attaches to the familiar material objects that he surrounds himself with. This has been the basis on which he has founded his 'home' in Edinburgh, however he also looks ahead to his future in Peru. Objects play "a similar role in our unconsciousness, as language does in our consciousness" (Hecht 2001: 141). Through them Haran activates his memories, sensorial life experiences, and keeps alive in his memory his family and his *tierra*, Peru that help him feel "at home" in Edinburgh as much as possible. "Autobiographical narration" that is knitted out of one's memories and knowledge can be seen as a key way of creating, expanding and preserving one's sense of identity (Hecht 2001). Haran continuously constructs his 'home' by telling the stories about his life, his children in the UK and his family and friends in Peru.

Shall we dance more?- close and away from ‘home’

Pepe from Ecuador went to a salsa party at the Harry’s bar in Edinburgh one day. That night *salsa* and *bachata* tunes familiar to Pepe were played. He loves dancing. On that night he noticed only one Cuban guy whom he knew. There were also some Scots, a Chinese guy and an Indian guy, Pepe commented.

And I saw them dancing salsa and I said “Oh my god”, as I saw how [well] they dance salsa. And the DJ, also a Scottish guy, had good taste and played such salsa tunes that made your body move on its own. And I said: I am going to dance. I cannot stand looking without dancing. This is what a Latin person has to do, Pepe said.

Pepe had to dance as his body started dancing on its own after hearing the music he enjoyed. “I approached a Scottish girl because there were no Latinas, or maybe I did not see any but the most girls were Scottish”. He asked her whether she would like to dance. The girl happily agreed to dance salsa with him. “Keep the ball rolling”, Pepe commented and with an enthusiasm and excitement started dancing. They danced one song, two songs, three songs.

I completely forgot that I was in Scotland. I thought I was dancing at a Latin discotheque. We danced and danced. Later on the DJ put on a *bachata* song and the girl said “let’s continue” and asked “Do you dance bachata?” And I told her: “of course” and we continued dancing. She did not let me go, Pepe said.

Pepe was very surprised that here in Edinburgh, people can dance *salsa* and *bachata*. The girl did not let him leave the dance floor. They kept dancing for a long time. On that particular night while dancing and listening to familiar tunes, Pepe told me, he forgot for a while that he was in Scotland and actually felt as if he were at one of the salsa clubs in Ecuador or Spain where he had previously lived. By attending salsa parties and using his imagination Pepe created his ‘self’.

Like “[f]or the Germans⁸⁴ salsa night takes them away from their home, from their everyday life, it is their time for the fantasy” (Skinner 2007: 492), so salsa parties take Scottish people and other non Latin Americans who dance it in Edinburgh “away from their home”. Those people in Edinburgh who attend salsa classes and at parties practise

⁸⁴ In Hamburg, among whom Skinner (2007) conducted his research on the salsa dance.

the steps they learnt during the classes make their dances very repetitive. Latin Americans who come after the classes depend on “‘the rhythm in their blood’- they know how to dance and do not have to learn it” (Wieschiolek 2003: 126). Pepe was taken on a journey ‘home’ when listening and dancing to salsa and bachata. We can therefore observe how music and dance accommodate two contrasting journeys, one away from ‘home’ and the other that takes one ‘home’.

I met Pepe later on at several salsa parties in various clubs in Edinburgh, always smiling and dancing a lot. Receiving positive energy from the dance and from people dancing is what mattered to him, he commented. When you come for a dance after a stressful or tiring day you begin to live again. It is so relaxing and friendly. In a way one could argue that Pepe had a “‘chance to recreate the “every-night life”” (Delgado and Munoz 1997 in Skinner 2007 490) “of [his] homeland” (Skinner 2007: 490) by attending these parties and dancing a lot. Pepe enjoys salsa parties in Edinburgh, where he feels at ‘home’. Pepe experiences salsa and bachata music through his body. By using his muscles and mind when dancing he recreates his ‘home’ as it is the memory of his ‘home’ that is stored in his body, in his muscles and in every cell. When familiar tunes are played Pepe automatically remembers with his body what it is like to dance salsa and bachata. He remembers past experiences and settings related to him dancing. Dancing and listening to salsa and bachata are embodied acts that allow Pepe to experience ‘home’ through his body. “The embodiment of salsa is approached as a two-fold process whereby bodies are experienced through music, when present, and whereby music...is experienced through our bodies” (Román-Velázquez 1999: 116). In Pepe’s case ‘home’ is experienced through his body and music.

The rhythm of music

Many Latin Americans recreate their homeland by listening to music and/or dancing to the melodies they had been familiar with before coming to Edinburgh.

It is more the music that unites the Latin American ‘community’ in Edinburgh. I do not think it is food because every country has different ways of cooking. Every country uses different spices for their food. I think that the common thing for Latin people is music.

The language also, but I do not think that much, For example there are some who have different accents, different terms...I believe what joins people the most is dance. [...] There are people for example from Peru who dance salsa very well but Chileans do not have this 'Caribbean-ness', this rhythm that we have", Nicola said.

For Nicola from the Dominican Republic being part of the Latin American 'community', being surrounded by people who have passion for music and dance - and especially those who have a sense of rhythm while dancing, as she said "the Caribbean-ness', this rhythm that we have" - makes her feel united and closer to 'home'. She frequently attends reggaeton and salsa parties at the Wash bar or El Barrio in Edinburgh and this makes her feel "at home". She is surprised that even though Peru is not geographically located in the Caribbean some of the Peruvians she knows dance with the same flexibility, easiness and the Caribbean sense of rhythm as she does. Salsa and reggaeton music is for Nicola and some other Latin American migrants, drawing from Wieschialek (2003: 126), a means for founding and corroborating their identity and for emphasising the importance of 'their culture in a foreign context'.

In and through dance, through the specific rhythm with which Nicola moves to salsa and reggaeton, by using her body language including gestures and facial mimicry, as well as through the emotions expressed while dancing, she communicates 'Caribbean-ness' and the sense of 'home'. Dance can be treated as a kind of body language comprised of "signs (body movements, steps etc.) and [being] governed by rules (rhythm, the sequence of dance moves, the style of dancing, etc.)" (Pušnik and Sicherl 2010: 107-108). Dance and society are mutually linked to each other. Dance is formed through culture (Wieschialek 2003: 115; Pušnik and Sicherl 2010: 107) and is directly connected to social communication (Pušnik and Sicherl 2010: 107).

For Nicola music is very important in her life. "For example when I am in a certain mood I listen to music. Music calms me down. It is as if I were going to my country. This helps me cheer me up a little", Nicola concluded. Tacchi (1998: 14) considers radio sound as "material culture in the home" that "contribute[s] to textured domestic soundscapes". Music and familiar sounds for Latin Americans in Edinburgh are also an integral part of one's daily life that construct crucial "domestic environments" and embrace meaning (Tacchi 1997: 14). For Nicola the sense of 'home' is embodied through familiar music and dance.

Music and ‘home’

It is half way through my fieldwork and I meet Simon, originally from Chile, who is one of the members of *Secreto Tropical* band. He personally listens to rock music, especially to hard rock and grunge. He likes bands such as Pearl Jam, Nirvana and Soundgarden. This is the music he has on his iPod and the music he listens to when working. For him music is a very important part in his life. He learned how to play the guitar almost 15 years ago and later on began playing in his band with his friends in Chile. They recorded some tracks. If he could have been a professional musician he would have been a rock star, he told me. When he came to Edinburgh he realised that ‘Latin’ music is very popular and sells well and he thinks it is a very good business, especially salsa. In Chile he never danced salsa. At the parties he attended, salsa was never played. When there was dance music it was either *pop* or *cumbia* but salsa, at least in Chile, is not very popular.

For me, being in a cumbia band opened my mind to the music that I listened to. For example listening to cumbia in Chile is not seen in a good light. It is also something to do with social classes. The working class are the ones who listen to cumbia all day. Those from the middle class would listen to cumbia if a street party took place. And I liked to dance it but I would never listen to it. When I began with cumbia here, I began to listen to it. I began to understand it and began to play it, obviously. I started with other forms [of music]. For instance my friends who are in Chile, those with whom I had a rock band, used to tell me that I had sold myself. One of my friends created the cumbia band. He thought that it would be exceptional, entertaining and new to have a cumbia band in Edinburgh. To have a rock band would not, as there are over fifty, and it would be one of many, Simon said.

Secreto Tropical brought *cumbia* to Edinburgh. Before coming to Edinburgh from Chile Simon had never been in a *cumbia* band. Now he is open to new music styles and, he told me, he would be ready to go to Chile to play *cumbia* but many of his friends would not understand it. Simon told me that when he listens to Latin music he recalls Latin parties [*fiestas Latinas*] in Chile but he has never listened to this type of music on a regular basis. He has been listening to rock since he was a teenager and it is rock music that brings his memories back ‘home’.

Of course I transport myself to Chile even though this music has nothing to do with Chile. It is something personal. For me it represents a lot. Yes, there is a music style in

Chile that is only Chilean and every time I listen to it I reminisce about Chile. It is called *cueca* and is Chile's national dance. It has its own rhythm that does not exist in other popular music. At least not in any that I know. So for example when we celebrate Chilean Independence day we listen to this music. And this is what brings me back to Chile. But different music, not only Latin music, takes me to Chile. I have listened to music all my life, Simon said.

I asked Simon whether he dances in Edinburgh and he told me that he took some salsa classes but he does not think he is good at it. We spoke about salsa parties in Edinburgh and he does not like them. 'I do not like them because these *fiestas de salsa* are very structured. You have to know how to dance. You have to attend dance classes. And at the fiestas that we organise you do whatever you want and you have good time. This is what we always say about *cumbia*, that it does not matter that you do not know how to dance. You dance it how you want. And with salsa you have to know how to dance. So at the few *fiestas de salsa* that I went to with my friends we felt weird. [...] We were like the outcasts of the fiesta. And of course if you are an outcast at a fiesta you won't like it. But this type of *fiesta* in Chile does not exist. I imagine that there are some groups where they teach salsa in a school and they have this type of fiesta, but if you went to a Latin American *fiesta* in Chile it would never be like that. It is very popular and I know that people associate us Latinos immediately with salsa', Simon commented.

In *el Barrio* club in Edinburgh Simon told me there is one 'Latino' DJ who plays *reggaeton* all the night, whereas at the *fiestas* I attended with the Latin American society in Teviot there was a variety of music. "For example party you went to last Saturday was the closest to the music that we listen to. A little bit of *reggaeton* but at least we mix it with *cumbia*, *merengue* and other stuff", Simon added. Music and, for some, also dance play an important role in the everyday lives of Latin Americans in Edinburgh. However many of the people I spoke to see a huge difference between "fiestas" they are used to and "fiestas Latinas" organised in Edinburgh.

On the contrary Carlos, originally from Peru, enjoys both the dance classes and parties in Edinburgh. I met him at the salsa and bachata classes I attended at the beginning of my fieldwork, at the University of Edinburgh, and later on at various fiestas Latinas in Teviot, in *Boteco do Brasil* and at the *fiestas patrias* organised by Mercedes. I attended

various dance classes with different instructors and in different clubs to see who actually attends these classes and who comes just for the party. I attended and observed particularly classes and parties organised by salsa teachers from Latin America who are often also DJs for the parties after the classes. Carlos goes to salsa classes and salsa parties because he likes dancing. During one of our conversations he told me that, for example, in Peru salsa parties are also called ‘socials’ and that people go there not just to dance but “if they invite a girl it is more for talking than dancing”.

Very few Latin Americans attend dance classes in Edinburgh. Some have taken classes out of curiosity but the structured nature of the class was not for them. Some others like Carlos decided to attend salsa classes in order to be able to dance like other people who go to salsa parties in Edinburgh. Those people like dancing but, because of the ‘dance scene’ being very closed and structured in Edinburgh, in order to feel comfortable at these *fiestas*, they had to adjust to the dance style here. However, many Latin Americans feel restricted by the structure of the classes and acquired steps and dance the way they like. When going to “Edinburgh fiesta Latina”, they go out with other Latin Americans and have fun all together without feeling, as Simon described, an ‘outcast’. Simon told me he felt like an ‘outcast’ at one of these parties where he did not dance the way those who attend dance classes did, and after he danced with some girls who attended salsa classes they did not want to dance with him again. He just stood to one side and observed how others danced. Salsa classes make, as described in Renato Rosaldo’s poem published and analysed by Skinner (2007: 486), the “dancing bodies [...] disciplined and constrained according to the work of their teacher [...] who calls out specific moves for the student to perform”. Andrea from Mexico told me that she went to dance salsa when her friends invited her out.

But it is all foreigners who want to learn salsa, darn it, and it is like a simulacrum. I do not like it because it is like...it puts me off, really ...and I say: “oh no”. When I go dancing, I go dancing full stop. If you go you dance and you have fun, but others are all learning [how to dance salsa]. It is thematic...like in Disneyland but for salsa, Andrea said.

Many Latin Americans I spoke to about the music and dance particularly did not find this aspect of the dance classes, and of the parties that happened after the classes, attractive as they are too structured and restrict one’s body and mind, making it

impossible for them to enjoy the party and the dance. Those parties are not Latin American enough for many. They are a copy of Latin America for others to enjoy. They are a reminder for many Latin Americans of how far away home is. However, as one could see, some people for example Pepe and Carlos do enjoy them.

The same parties, music and dance can be interpreted and bring completely different emotions, therefore it is very problematic to base “a sense of community, identification, solidarity, and shared affiliation” (Negus and Román-Velázquez 2002: 142) on music and dance. All in all what I could see during my fieldwork is that music in general plays an important role in the lives of the Latin Americans in Edinburgh. Some people listen to music, some sing, some compose and others dance. It is a variety of types of music that Latin Americans listen to. It is about the individual associations one has with particular types of music that enables one to ‘feel at home’ or to experience one’s emotions.

Associations with music and dance

Patricia mentioned a Peruvian song that is known across the whole of Latin America. ‘It is called *El Condor Pasa*. It has the rhythm of drums and flutes, and later on they made this song in English’. Patricia started humming the song at this point.

I like this song, for example, because look: *el condor* is for example in our flag, so it represents our *patria*. We have coats of arms on the flag and inside there is a condor with its spread wings. So this song *El Condor Pasa* brings me lots of memories of the mountains in Ecuador, of the rivers and waterfalls of many lakes. When I listen to this song I catapult myself immediately back to my country. I transfer to my country. This is what this song is for me, Patricia said.

Music and the sounds of nature have “certain ‘mood’ generating qualities” (Tacchi 1997: 16) for Patricia. Listening to Andean folk music takes her ‘home’. It allows her to recall the sounds of Ecuador that are an important part of her home-making process.

A deeper appreciation of sound could force us to overturn our static, spatialized world and make us consider in a new light the dynamic nature of sound, an open door to the comprehension of cultural sentiment.

(Stoller 1984: 561)

Home-making is a continuous process in which tangible and intangible elements complement each other. Sound in one's home connects the "intangible and non-visible or speakable aspects of the world- to feelings, moods, connections through time and space, and fantasy and imagination" (Tacchi 1997: 121).

For Pedro, originally from Venezuela, the emotions and feelings that he can get through listening to music are very important. He thinks that by looking at the music that is played on Venezuelan radios you can tell who Venezuelans are.

In our case as Latinos, well in case of Venezuela, the radio plays two types of music: music in English and Spanish music. I think this reflects who we are, how we grow up. We are a mix at least in the case of Venezuela and I think that this is something positive. It is difficult for us to define ourselves now. I like rock. I like other types of music. [...] I listen to salsa, I listen to merengue and I listen to rock. I can listen to Guns and Roses or [...] [to] Latin American rock. As I can listen to Gilberto Santa Rosa I can also listen to Ruben Blades [...]. The same with Juan Luis Guerra. So I like both. For me music and the variety of music are vital, Pedro said.

When I enter Pedro's home I can hear music in the background. As he tells me music is played in his home constantly in the background. He listens to his collection of Cds or to a Venezuelan radio station via Internet. Radio, and music in general, form part of his "everyday narratives at home" (Pink 2003: 50). Sound creates both his home and his self. It is conjoined with "[his] daily emotional experiences and domestic activities" (ibid.: 50). Radio sound creates "domestic environments" (Tacchi 1997: 96, 103). It allows Pedro to "establish and maintain identities" (ibid.: 104). By listening to Venezuelan radio and the music he associates with Venezuela he emphasises who he is and constructs his 'home'. Through the radio and the sound of music Pedro can move through time and space. It can bring him "memories and feelings, of other places and other times" but also "ground [him] in the present" (ibid.: 104). It helps him to re-create the atmosphere of the 'home' he remembers in Venezuela.

For Pedro various sounds in his 'soundscape', which is "a total appreciation of the acoustic environment" (Schafer 1994 [1977]), are an integral part of the home-making process. Pedro is used to having the windows open in his house all the time. He is not always able to do that in Scotland as it is much colder here than in Venezuela. However, whenever he can he opens the windows as he does not like silence and part of his

‘home’ construction are the noises of the city - cars, buses, people passing by. This reminds him of his ‘home’ in Venezuela and it is something he likes being surrounded by while living in Scotland in order to feel comfortable and at ‘home’. Silence drives him crazy. Whenever he has moved to a new place he has made sure he stayed near a busy road to be able to hear street noises, apart from one time. When I visited him he had moved outside Edinburgh to a house that was located in a very quiet neighbourhood. He did not like living there and was not planning to carry on staying there. Fortunately when we spoke he had already arranged with his family to move to another place.

Some of the Latin Americans I spoke to only started listening to music or dancing popular dances of their countries of origin when they moved to Edinburgh. Others have always listened to it. Some others listen to music that they individually associate with ‘home’, be it popular or classical music. Latin Americans bring to Edinburgh familiar tunes and rhythms that connect them to their personal memories i.e. time spent with friends and family, *fiestas* and places they have lived in.

La tierra la tira mucho a uno

Esteban, originally from Colombia, told me that “*La tierra la tira mucho a uno*” [Your homeland pulls you back a lot]. You never actually forget where you come from. Esteban really likes ‘old Colombian music’ as he described. He enjoys listening to *La Piragua*, which is a song by José Barros from the 1960s. This is a *cumbia* song which is also in the song repertoire of the *Secreto Tropical* band. I also sang it at the beginning of my fieldwork when I went along to the singing group *Latin American canta en Edimburgo* in the *Tollcross community centre*. There are some songs composed and sung by Latin American musicians that bring the Latin American ‘community’ together and give a sense of ‘togetherness’ - of knowing the same songs and being able to sing them all together. Some people attended the singing group to share their passion for Latin American music with other people attending the group while others came to get to know new songs from various Latin American countries. Just after I finished my fieldwork the singing group decided to meet at each other’s houses instead of in the

formal space at the community centre. Having this space in Edinburgh where Latin Americans can sing in Spanish evokes ‘togetherness’. Music and the songs they sing embody a feeling of “time, place, feeling, style, belonging, and identity” (Feld and Fox 1994: 38). Latin Americans at the singing group discuss the lyrics of the songs, talk about the history of various Latin American countries and talk about their lives. They learn new songs from each other. The act of singing in a group and gathering is a process of home-making. “Music and dance are key symbolic vehicles through which different peoples recapitulate their version of history and simultaneously forge and communicate their sense of cultural or ethnic identity” (Sanabria 2007: 336).

When I went to interview Karim at his place he told me that he was born with music, with salsa. His father likes singing. His mother is a singer and he also likes singing and playing the guitar. For him you cannot separate food from music. Both activate different senses that are experienced as “an interactive web of experience” (Howes and Classen 2014: 5). That complex manifold relationship between various senses is called ‘intersensoriality’ (Howes 2005: 9). Senses can strengthen, oppose or contradict each other (ibid.: 9-10). ‘When you meet with your family for dinner you also sing later on. Music is an integral part of the family’, Karim said. In Edinburgh he listens more to rock music in English because it is appropriate to that place. He misses ‘his’ music, but feels this is not ‘his’ environment, and therefore does not listen to music from back home. “Music marks [marca] your life. And if you go to one place and listen to your music it is as if you were at home”, Karim commented. One can associate specific sounds with a particular space and certain activities (Pink 2003: 50). As such, some sounds are considered “the natural ambience” of one’s home (ibid.: 50). When one constructs home, it is not only through the use of material objects but also by creating a specific atmosphere and evoking certain feelings. One can use ‘specific sensory strategies’ to “create [one’s] own sense of space and self” (Pink 2003: 47).

[Music] is like writing a tale but without words. Every piece of music is something, it comes out for a reason. Something that happened in your life, something that you felt, Victor said.

Music and dance, their expressive movements and sounds, are like storytelling in which “the storyteller”, here the dancer or the musician, “takes what he tells from experience- his own or that reported by others. And he in turn makes it the experience of those who

are listening to his tale” (Benjamin [1936] 2007: 364). For Victor music was always part of his childhood. His brother, who lives in Chile, is also a musician. His childhood was during the government of Allende. He listened to the music of *Inti-Illimani*, *Violetta Parra* and *Victora Jara*. ‘I have memories of this music from Chile’, Victor added. ‘Also the folk music in Argentina is very rich [excellent], very nice and we stayed in a place where music was everywhere. From there I have my first guitar [from Argentina]’. The guitar was actually the only thing that Victor brought with him when he came to the UK.

And after, well, here [in the UK] for Chileans and for many people who left because of political reasons the music converts into a weapon, a cultural weapon. A weapon to express the fight [the struggle] of Latin Americans of our times. Songs say a lot. Well, many people [from Latin America who came to the UK] did not know English or German. The music was what made us closer to the public who came to listen to a song, but also in a translation they understood more or less about political things. Music has always brought people together.... through singing my brother tried to explain the situation of a Chilean or a Latin-American. It is a very powerful art. A very powerful weapon. It reaches people more quickly. If you write something some people will not understand it, some people will throw it away and will not read it. But singing a song [is different]...[and in music] you express yourself without language. Without the meaning of the words, Victor said.

Sometimes words on their own, or words at all, cannot describe all the emotions and does not convey the meaning. Sometimes the words just don’t come out of the mouths of those who have experienced trauma and they find it impossible to share their experiences through words in writing, or even speaking. Many of these people who have been through traumatic events in their lives have sought means of self-expression and found it in art- painting, drawing, sculptures, and photography. Others compose songs themselves or sing songs composed by other people, or compose music without lyrics that sometimes says more than vague words. Some others write poems. Others dance. Many people who have experienced very traumatic events in their lives, or have seen lots of violence in their countries of origin, when they came to the UK feel like Victor who said that he feels like ‘an ambassador of truth’. They inform the world about what has really happened in their ‘homeland’, as political and media propaganda very often manipulate and adjust ‘the truth’, and show pictures as if through a distorting mirror. One can be certain that many of these people have kept their memories which you cannot get rid of, and willingly or unwillingly in their minds they pertain to their

place of origin, to their 'roots'. From the music Latin Americans in Edinburgh compose, listen to, sing and/or dance to it is possible to learn a lot about 'the history of Latin America', and about the emotional state of individuals living in Edinburgh. Music is a 'cultural weapon' that includes and excludes some when living abroad. It is part of one's sense of 'home'. For some Latin Americans Edinburgh means being far away from 'home', for others being 'at home'.

I looked in this chapter at different home-making processes of Latin Americans. Lorena creates her home through everyday life, routine sets of practices and behaviours. Victor refers to an imaginary home. For Mercedes, Patricia and Pablo food and material objects play a crucial role in their home-making. John and Erika feel connected to Pachamama- the Mother Earth. In the section on **Haran's home** one can see that he creates his 'home' through both material objects and through the sentimental storytelling about his family relationships. In sections on music, dance and rhythm we can see that one can get close to as well as far away from home through one's individual associations with music and dance. 'Home' is experienced by the Latin Americans in Edinburgh through various sets of senses that are, drawing on Howes and Classen (2014: 1) shaped by one's culture, however individually experienced.

We could see in this chapter the importance of the Latin American sensorium in the process of home-making. Latin Americans, drawing on Jacobson (2009: 369) find ways of settling themselves "into a surrounding that does not belong to them". They bring their homes with them by relying on "some familiar habit or interest", of one's "lived bodies" (ibid: 369). At the same time I argue that by looking at different individuals and their homes' constructions one can see that there are differences in how individuals sense the world. Drawing on Desjarlais (2003: 3), Latin Americans' different ways of sensing the world affect how they live their lives, including how they create their homes and how they recall them. These differences also reveal to us that the knowledge of a social and cultural milieu can be individually experienced.

Conclusion

As I write this conclusion, a poem – ‘The Onion’ – by a Polish poet, Wisława Szymborska (1976), comes to my mind. For me, this poetic allegory of the human being captures perfectly my understanding of the Latin Americans I have come to know in Edinburgh.

The onion, now that’s something else.
Its innards don’t exist.
Nothing but pure onionhood
fills this devout onionist.
Oniony on the inside,
onionesque it appears.
It follows its own daimonion
without our human tears.

Our skin is just a coverup
for the land where none dare go,
an internal inferno,
the anathema of anatomy.
In an onion there’s only onion
from its top to its toe,
onionymous monomania,
unanimous omninudity.

At peace, of a peace,
internally at rest.
Inside it, there’s a smaller one
of undiminished worth.
The second holds a third one
the third contains a fourth.
A centripetal fugue.
Polyphony compressed.

Nature’s rotundest tummy
its greatest success story,
the onion drapes itself in its
own aureoles of glory.
We hold veins, nerves, and fat,
secretions’ secret sections.
Not for us such idiotic
onionoid perfections.

In this poem, the lyrical subject ironically compares an onion with a human. Unlike humans, an onion is an entity without the negative feeling of fear, without contradictions – clear and harmonious with its inner layers. It has no secrets. It is the

same both outside and inside. On the other hand, humans are unpredictable, full of contradictions and surprises. The perfect state of an onion is an irony that the lyrical subject refers to as 'idiotic'. This made me think of the nature of human beings, and what Latin Americans in Edinburgh are like. Human beings have commonalities; as it is metaphorically said in the poem, they are restricted to their bodies and all consist of "veins, nerves, and fat". The Latin Americans I met are of the opinion that they share certain commonalities, such as the 'Latin American dynamics', a 'shared' history of oppression, the fact that many have felt 'rootless' at some point of their stay in Edinburgh and at other times as 'Latin American', and that they have been stereotyped as 'Latino', that they sometimes eat food from their own countries that is very similar in other Latin American countries. And what is particularly important is that they maintain strong family and pseudo-familial links. Each Latin American person can be analysed through a figure of 'Anyone', "a human actor who is to be recognized as at once universal and individual" with "his or her universal capacities", and with a "singular expression" (Rapport 2012: 2).

Those Latin Americans I met surpass national territories. Their communality is that they all operate within and out with different categories. They have the same 'capacities' as human beings (ibid.: 2) – to reject some categories and to accept others. "Our nature is a plethora of capacities, an excessiveness, an overriding capacity to be open to the world and go beyond what it is made out to be at present..." (Rapport 2010: 4). However, each person on their own decides which categories to take on, which not to, and how to live their own lives. There are an indecipherable number of these categories- some of them being 'Latin American', 'Latino', 'immigrant' and 'student'. Some are related to specific factors, including (but not limited to) a person's nationality, race, ethnicity, gender, or other influences such as their family roles (e.g. being a mother or father). Each Latin American individual is interesting as it is one of a kind, unrepeatable and full of contradictions. One of the characters of this thesis – Marisol – described herself as being a 'universal citizen' at some point of our discussion. She referred to 'universal humanity', because she believes that every place where she has lived has given her new life experiences, knowledge about the world, and memories. And subsequently this has connected her to all those places, and to the people she met on her life path.

Marisol took me on a journey through her life, from the time she was born to when she settled in Edinburgh. Braidotti's concept of the 'nomadic identity' (2006) inspired me to look at how she created and re-created her personal identity (of who she is). Marisol considered herself to be Venezuelan, and later on in her teenage years she was told that she was born in Colombia. She visited Colombia a couple of times. She wanted to be able to tell that she is actually Colombian, but she has never been able to do so. She feels Venezuelan. She went through a stage when she felt she did not pertain to anywhere. During her stay in the UK, she overstayed her visa and realised how stressful it was to be illegal. She constantly thought about whether or not someone would stop her and find out that she should not be in the UK anymore. She has an Italian surname – after her father, and then later on in life she obtained a second surname – a Spanish one, and a Spanish passport. After moving to the UK she reconsidered who she was. She felt at times as a person belonging to all places, but also at the time we spoke she emphasised how important it was for her to feel Latin American and belong to the Latin American 'community' in Edinburgh. Braidotti's body of work opened a new way for me to analyse Latin American identity, and to understand the voluntary belonging to the Latin American 'community' as an anchor that brings stability when some Latin Americans like Marisol settle down in Edinburgh, and to see it as a foundation for Latin Americans' development of their personal identities.

I would propose a term of "none[t]here-ness" to describe a state of some Latin Americans who are at the moment living in Edinburgh, and who change how they feel throughout their lives – living in a changing world that is a 'world risk society' full of uncertainties and risk (Beck 2012: 3). At times, Latin Americans believe that they are neither from here – for example, Edinburgh – nor there (their countries of origin), and that consequently they do not belong to anywhere and are 'nowhere'. On other occasions they feel that they are from 'here' and/or from 'there'. The categories 'here' and 'there' fluctuate, as do one's sense of belonging. They are not fixed – much like people who are in constant movement, whether physical or in their minds. Some people migrate further to another country or move to another city in the UK; some return 'home', some move to other parts of Edinburgh, the city in which they already live. Many Latin Americans stay in Edinburgh, but nevertheless they go through different

stages during which they want to be active members of the Latin American ‘community’, and at other times not.

In the everyday lives of Latin Americans in Edinburgh, I observed small acts of constant rebirth. Different personal identities have different meanings at different stages of Latin Americans’ lives, and they each self-define differently their identities, which change through the course of their lives. Human beings, as Garcia Marquez ([1985] 1997: 237) believed, transform constantly. They are not born ‘ready’. They create and re-create themselves. Like Victor, who considered his identity at the time we spoke as ‘a PhD student’, not as ‘Mexican’ or ‘Latin American’. During another discussion, he demonstrated holding his very own understanding of who he is as a person, irrespective of what others think of him. And he also mentioned that, oftentimes, people attach to him the image of being ‘Latino’. He does not agree with this, but he does not explain it to the people attaching this image to him. He used to do so in the past but got very tired of having to repeat himself and prove to people who he is *not* and what he is *really* like. Victor shapes his own understanding of what it means to be ‘Latin American’, which very often differs from what others think when ascribing the same category to him.

In the framework of migration studies, this ethnographic work has revealed that there are varied routes that different Latin Americans took to Edinburgh, manifold reasons for migration and different factors that immigrants take into account when making a decision to migrate. In the “ethnographies of particular” (Abu-Lughod 1991: 466) presented in the thesis, I hope that the reader can see the complexity of Latin American migration experiences.

When I commenced my fieldwork, I intended to explore the lives of Latin Americans in Edinburgh and their belonging to the Latin American ‘community’ that I had heard many people refer to. I quickly realised that I had present in my mind Aristotle’s idea that ‘man is by nature a social animal’, which school imbued me with. However, what I began observing was that Latin Americans are foremost individuals, with their own motivations in this context as to why they decided to come together as members of the Latin American ‘community’. In regards to other studies on Latin Americans in the UK, I hope that this ethnographic study has revealed the importance of the phenomenon of

‘individuality’; i.e. “the individual writing of socio-cultural reality” (Rapport 1997: 10) as an approach to be taken when exploring the migration experiences of Latin Americans and their senses of belonging.

An important concept explored throughout this study is that of ‘community’. It has appeared in this research as an ethnographic and analytical term. Cohen’s community’s symbolic boundaries (1985) offered me an opportunity to look at individual motivations as to why some Latin Americans decided to participate in different events organised by members of the Latin American ‘community’ and other communities within the wider community, such as those of *Peruanos en Edimburgo*, as opposed to what were the common ‘forms’ (Cohen 1985) that brought them together in the first instance. The Latin Americans who claim to belong to the Latin American ‘community’ share some symbols, as discussed in the section on the collective system of representation, attaching their own meanings to them. However, the personal links that many Latin Americans maintain with each other on a day-to-day basis are also a crucial foundation that strengthens their sense of belonging to the Latin American ‘community’.

I would also like to emphasise here that the sense of belonging to the Latin American community is a question of individuality and not collectivity. I agree here with Amit and Rapport’s (2002: 111) view that ‘community’ can be perceived as a collection of ‘individual life-projects and trajectories in momentary construction of common ground’. Drawing from the above, Latin Americans in Edinburgh are the ones who choose – for multiple reasons – to belong, or not to belong to the Latin American ‘community’.

What is more, I would argue that Internet technologies are bleeding into Latin Americans’ day-to-day communication. They are an integral part of their lives. Latin Americans choose which medium to use, depending on what message or emotions they want to transmit and to whom. Internet technologies allow for transnational family links among Latin Americans, and for their sense of ‘Latin American-ness’ to be reinforced.

When discussing Day of the Dead, a celebration associated mainly with Mexico, I would hope the reader sees that when it was celebrated in Edinburgh it reached a supranational and a more individual level, bringing different people together who

participated in the event for a variety of different purposes. Some Latin Americans generalise how – from their viewpoint – there are differences between how Latin Americans handle death and how British people they met in Edinburgh do so. However, how one mourns and commemorates the deceased is something experienced entirely individually.

Crucial for the sense of ‘Latin American-ness’ to many Latin Americans in Edinburgh is the ‘Latin American dynamics’, which encompasses verbal and non-verbal communication; and the acts of consociation (Amit 2002: 4, 58-9), based on common interests, as well as others which are based on ‘symbolic markers’ of Latin American identity. Non-verbal communication includes the Latin American sensorium – with the sense of touch being particularly important in strengthening an embodied Latin American identity. The section on stereotypes discusses the role of stereotypes as a stigma against which the Latin Americans in Edinburgh need to fight, as well as a tool for creating one’s self and as a base that gives one a feeling of security when in contact with the ‘other’.

Finally, I hope that the reader is able to see that, for many Latin Americans in Edinburgh, it took some time to adapt to the new place – Edinburgh, its surroundings and its people. Many Latin Americans, after migrating to Edinburgh, realised that they can never return ‘home’, as in their minds they have actually never left it. Based on this, they continue to create and recreate their ‘home’ in Edinburgh – whether by use of their imagination, material objects, food, music, story-telling, sets of behaviours or transnational links with their family that are all sensed through different combinations of senses. The senses are, drawing on Howes and Classen (2014: 1), shaped by their culture – however, experienced individually. Diverse sensing of the world impacts how Latin Americans live their lives differently, and how they make their homes. Those differences reveal that knowledge of a socio-cultural milieu can be individually experienced. This thesis considered the symbolic inclusion – and exclusion – of members of the Latin American ‘community’ in Edinburgh from several varying roles, as well as ways of being – and how Latin Americans negotiate and open the symbolic boundaries of their ‘community’.

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